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The Applied Anthropologist publishes peer-reviewed articles, commentaries, brief communications, field reports, and book reviews on a wide range of topics. The journal's focus is on cultural change and adaptation in the modern world. It explores how humans approach, analyze, and develop solutions to cultural, ecological, economic, and technological problems. The journal is supported and underwritten by the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology. Guidelines for authors and electronic access to back issues are available on the website or by contacting Managing Editor Andrea Akers at andrea.akers.mader@gmail.com or Editor-in-Chief Peter Van Arsdale at pvanarsd@du.edu. Further information about the society is available at www.HPSfAA.org. Membership information is available by contacting Merun Nasser at 303-449-0278 or at merun@worldnet.att.net.

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POINT-TO-POINT

ANDREA AKERS, MANAGING EDITOR



PETER VAN ARSDALE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Volume 32, Number 1 of *The Applied Anthropologist* tackles issues of trans-cultural collaboration, benevolent dictators, indigenous film, and gender neutral language. As with past editions the authors tackle many issues central to applied anthropology as a discipline, and can motivate our colleagues to engage these further.

The examination of the collaboration between anthropologists and tribal members concerning traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is an important, and arguably seminal, contribution to a growing focus within applied anthropology. Betsy Chapoose, Sally McBeth, Sally Crum, and Aline LaForge participate in an important discussion of participatory research through collaboration between anthropologists and tribal members in regards to Northern Ute traditional ecological knowledge. Through five different ethnobotanical projects they seek to explore, document, and revive Ute traditional ecological knowledge in the Rocky Mountain region of Colorado. This work contributes to a larger focus of applied anthropology in collaborative resource management and participatory research which continues to push the discipline ahead.

Shawn Russell offers a provocative argument of the role of United States in foreign civil wars utilizing Rwanda as a case study. Russell contextualizes his argument with the history of Rwanda and the civil war as well as analyzing the current system of government which he describes as a benevolent dictatorship. He considers factors such as stability, continuity of government, security, invasions, insurgencies, crime rates and patterns, number of political prisoners, terrorist attacks aimed at overthrowing the government, food security, health, education, economic improvement, and press freedoms. This case study analysis of the Rwandan benevolent dictatorship is then utilized to understand the role of the United States in foreign civil wars, including differences among acting before, during, or after a conflict. Russell argues that benevolent dictatorships, although curtailing many social and political freedoms, can create more stable economic and political conditions that facilitate an easier transition to democracy, and that the United States can apply this knowledge to its role in overseas engagements.

By way of comparative analysis, William Lempert expounds on the role of anthropologists in indigenous film. With a postmodern lens Lempert discusses the double-bind for academic indigenous film makers in the pressure to conform to romanticized images as well as to provide critical analyses of film, but on the same note legitimizes their specific ability to explore issues of identity and self-determination while presenting culture change in a complementary light. Ethnographic filmmakers cannot tackle issues of identity and yet perpetuate an "ethnographic reality" without also addressing culture change in an effort to be objective in their filmmaking. In the end Lempert calls for a critical engagement with indigenous film by anthropologists in an effort to more broadly complement contemporary indigenous scholarship.

Richard Clemmer provides two case studies in order to evaluate the role of anthropologists in collaboration. His two examples relate to an expert panel convened by the AAA and being an expert witness in a court case. Clemmer argues that anthropologists can learn three important lessons from these case studies of collaboration. In brief, first is that many baseline ethnographies are limited, second that representing a group of people is not straightforward, and third that consultants and clients have very different priorities and goals in collaborative ventures. In the end Clemmer comes to the conclusion that, typically, collaboration in representation is usually possible and almost always desirable.

Edith King concludes the issue by revisiting the status of gender-neutral language in the 21st century. She discovered that the use of gender-neutral language since the Feminist Movement of the 1970s has declined and that as writers and readers we need to be critical of the use of male-gendered language such as "mankind" or "man-made". King reasserts the importance of identifying and correcting sexist language both in our own writing and in the writing of others.

Our ongoing thanks are expressed to our associate editors Constance Holland, Joanne Moore, and Teresa Tellechea, as well as our editorial assistant, Tim Schommer. Appreciation is extended to those who served as peer reviewers for articles appearing in the current issue: Richard Shannon, Ph.D.; Howard Stein, Ph.D.; Teresa Tellechea, Ph.D.; Joanne Moore, M.A.; Stephen Stewart, Ph.D.; and Constance Holland, M.A.

—Andrea Akers, Managing Editor
—Peter Van Arsdale, Editor-in-Chief



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PLANTING A SEED: UTE ETHNOBOTANY, A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH IN APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY

BETSY CHAPOOSE, SALLY MCBETH,
SALLY CRUM, AND ALINE LAFORGE

ABSTRACT

This article provides a collaborative model for participatory research, here defined as seeking new ways to “explore methodologies that more accurately legitimize the expertise of the cultures being investigated. This effort to share-out authority and to acknowledge who the authorities and sources of our data really are, is part of the broader questioning of the motives and objectivity of the anthropological endeavor” (McBeth 1998: xi). We examine how anthropologists (including archaeologists) and tribal members can collaborate on issues regarding traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and cultural property rights; participation by indigenous peoples in advancing the directions and goals of a variety of projects is critical to this inquiry. Centrally, this article explores tribal cultural self-determination through an exploration of the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray (known as the Northern Ute) ethnobotanical experiences and research.

KEY WORDS: ethnobotany, traditional ecological knowledge, collaborative research, Northern Ute

INTRODUCTION¹

Stories and narrative play central roles in Native American and anthropological traditions; pursuing a collaborative discourse is therefore the goal of this article.

The story begins in 2002 on a clear cold November day in Greeley, Colorado. Chapoose (after consultation with long-time friend and associate Crum, who suggested an academic affiliation) approached McBeth and other anthropologists at the University of Northern Colorado about beginning discussions on a Ute Ethnobotany Project that she had been pondering for a number of years. The project, as conceived by Chapoose, would be based on inclusive and respectful collaboration between cultural anthropologists, archaeologists, and Native people of the Northern Ute tribe. In discussions among the four of us over many years, we have continually recognized that Native people and anthropologists were going to have to work together to protect cultural resources. This type of collaboration was already central to our combined philosophies.

In December of 2002 (and in consultation with Crum and LaForge) Chapoose and McBeth sat down in the Northern Ute tribal offices in Ft. Duchesne and crafted the following introduction.

The Ute Ethnobotany Project is designed to document and transmit plant identification skills between living Ute generations. The method by which this will be accomplished is through fieldtrips to eastern Utah and western Colorado (traditional Ute Territory) to record (on audio and videotape) Ute perspectives on cognitive ethnobotany (how humans view and classify plants) as well as economic ethno-

botany (how humans utilize plants). The tribal members of a variety of ages will participate; males and females will make separate trips to the same areas since it has been our experience that plant collecting and plant use are gender-specific activities. The lasting benefit to the tribe will be the creation of a bilingual herbarium and project report which will be used for educational purposes.

Chapoose articulated numerous objectives that she was interested in exploring in the context of what has become a ten-year endeavor. The main concern was the use of the ethnobotanical data as a management tool for the many requests that her office handles for input on managing archeological sites on federal lands. Chapoose takes issue with the compartmentalized approach utilized by federal agencies. Native Americans view the world holistically; but a comprehensive approach is not currently employed by federal agencies when administering the lands under their tenure. Their approach is to identify the archeology as Native American and consult with tribes who were believed to have inhabited the area; this results in limited and partial data pertaining to both the boundaries of the archeological site as well as the cultural landscape that the archeological site is part of.

Also included in her concerns, were using the ethnobotanical data as a management tool for natural and cultural resources, re-establishing connection with Ute ancestral homelands, and making initial steps toward revitalizing the Ute language. These emerging and evolving themes are elaborated later on.²

Our intention was to submit a grant to the National Park Service Tribal Preservation Programs which states:

Over the last 500 years, Indian cultures have experienced massive destruction, but the tide is changing. Indian tribes are using their resources to halt the loss of language, tradition, religion, objects, and sites. Fundamentally different in character from other components of American society, Indian tribes are living cultures that can continue and be strengthened only through the perpetuation of their traditions (National Park Service Tribal Preservation Grant <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tribal/>)

While our dream of submitting a \$50,000 grant was never realized due to time constraints, tribal politics, and the like, the seed planted that December afternoon has led to the five projects described below. These projects are collaborative, with a number of federal agencies including the National Park Service, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management providing much of the necessary funding. As anthropologists, McBeth, Crum, and LaForge were privileged to record and synthesize our experiences into written reports for the funding agencies as well as the tribe. In working with tribal members we witnessed emotional connections among the generations. The preservation of plant-use traditions has, according to tribal members, sparked a concrete interest in preserving not only plant lore, but also the intimate and profound connections among a people, ancestral landscape, and the voices of the elders. Most importantly, we learned that Native beliefs concerning stewardship of the land carry important lessons for the modern world.

Additionally, we hope that undergraduate and graduate students and professional anthropologists reading this article will understand that they can develop the problem-solving skills to address real-world problems and needs, and that "anthropology often works best when it works with others—when its tools and insights are integrated into broader interdisciplinary projects" (Borofsky 2011: 78-79). Indeed, we hope that the reader will discover the cross-cultural values of the authors reflected herein.

UTE SUBSISTENCE PRACTICES

The five projects described below emerged and blossomed as the seed began to germinate. The following description of Ute subsistence practices is relevant to all of the five projects. The Utes practiced a flexible subsistence system sometimes called the seasonal round. Extended family groups (from 20-100 people) moved through known hunting and gathering grounds (several hundred square miles) on a seasonal basis, taking advantage of the plant and animal species available. The image of a group of Indians randomly and endlessly searching for foodstuffs in a semi-desert clime is far from the truth. Rather, the seasonal round is a regular circuit in

which the group moves from eco-zone to eco-zone, harvesting and hunting the periodic abundance of flora and fauna (cf. Buckles 1971; Callaway et al. 1986:337; Fowler and Fowler 1971:38-49 [Powell 1868-1880]; Goss 1972, 2000; Greubel 2002; Jorgensen 1964:186-187; Lewis 1994, n.d.; Opler 1940:124-125; Steward 1974; Stewart 1942).

This elegant adaptation required a profound and systematic knowledge of the territory, the plant and animal life, seasonal and annual fluctuations, as well as preservation and storage techniques. It was a "vertical buffet, limited only by the seasons" (Simmons 2000:3). Cooperation and communication among and between bands was also indispensable. The speakers of the Ute language did not necessarily think of themselves as a tribe. Folks from different bands intermarried, recognized each other, and traded, but did not otherwise maintain a larger tribal organization. Bands seasonally congregated for communal rabbit or antelope hunts or pine nut harvests, and the annual spring Bear Dance.

The Utes (and other Great Basin tribes) were, essentially, sophisticated naturalists and dieticians, exploiting their environment through intelligent planning. Moving across the landscape kept the Ute in touch with their land base both materially and spiritually (Fowler 2000:91). Today this awareness is called Traditional Ecological Knowledge (or TEK). "The term *traditional ecological knowledge* came into widespread use only in the 1980s, but the practice of traditional ecological knowledge is as old as ancient hunter-gatherer cultures" (Berkes 1999:2; cf. e.g. Ford and Martinez 2000; Inglis 1993; Kawagley 2006; Nazarea 1999). Traditional ecological knowledge will be discussed later on.³

FIVE ETHNOBOTANICAL PROJECTS

The first project is the Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) Oral History and Cultural Interpretation Project. Begun in 2000 and completed in 2007, the project's original (flawed) purpose was revised. Originally intended to be a collection of oral histories from the Ute and Arapaho about the area in and around RMNP (an impossibility since all Native people had been forced out of their mountain hunting grounds over 125 years ago), the project was amended so that knowledgeable members of the Ute and Arapaho tribes could be invited into the park to visit archaeological sites, reflect on possible meanings, and revisit ancestral homelands (cf. McBeth 2007).

The portion of the fieldwork relevant to this publication was the invitation of Northern Ute (mostly women) into the park, accompanied by the park botanist Leanne Benton, to visit archaeological sites at various altitudes of the park's landscape. The purpose of bringing a group of Northern Ute women into RMNP was to try to learn a little more about the Utes' use of plants in high altitude landscapes. Not surprisingly (given that their ancestors were displaced more than 125

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years ago), Benton was more familiar with the uses of plants in the Park than the Ute women were. However, the emotions evoked by these visits were palpable as the women reflected on memory, place, and loss.

A statement made by Mariah Cuch, Northern Ute tribal member, during an August 2004 visit to RMNP, is significant to this line of inquiry. She said,

I have this thing that place has memory. Sometimes people think that things are lost, you know, they're gone. But it is just there, waiting. It's just waiting to be remembered. I don't myself believe in past lives, but I believe that this all belongs to all of us. Like a moment—just a tiny moment—and the land recognizes our presence here (Cuch as quoted in McBeth 2007: 3)

Geneva Accawanna, Uncompahgre Ute, said,

I feel so humbled that I'm here. And I can feel them; I can feel the spirits; it makes me cry to feel that I'm home—being on the Ute Trail, and being on the mountains—seeing the medicine wheel and praying there, I knew that my ancestors heard me (Accawanna as quoted in McBeth 2007:177).

After walking a portion of the Ute Trail in RMNP, Northern Ute Loya Arrum was in tears when she said,

But it's just the thought that you're walking on the same footsteps as your ancestors walked. Your feet [are] touching the same ground where they walked. I wanted to just lay on the ground. I just wanted to think about them. In one way it breaks my heart [loss of homelands], in another way I'm so glad. My heart is just overfilled with joy that I could make the connection, to be able to touch the stones that they touched. I'm seeing the same mountains that they saw (Arrum as quoted in McBeth 2007: 176).

Cuch, although younger than most of the Ute women who visited RMNP during the ethnobotany project, exhibited a detailed knowledge of traditional plant use. While inspecting a mountain mahogany plant in the Park, she related how she knew so much about mountain vegetation. She shared with Crum that when she was a child, the circus often came to Vernal, Utah, just east of the Uintah-Ouray Reservation. But Mariah's parents could not afford to take her and her siblings to the circus. Instead, so the children would not feel left out, Mariah's mother took them camping in the nearby Uintah Mountains. They camped with several women elders who were gathering plants for food and medicine. These childhood trips provided Mariah with treasured memories as well as a background in traditional gathering methods and uses of mountain plants (Crum 2004, personal communication).

The above are just a sample of emotive affirmations made by Northern Ute women expressing reflections on ancestral landscape.



Fig. 1: Northern Ute in Rocky Mountain National Park (back: TJ Ridley; middle: Mariah Cuch, Loya Arrum, Leanne Benton (botanist), Demoi Chimburaf, Venita Taveapont, Sally McBeth, Helen Wash; seated: Kathleen Chegup, Allain Myore, Betsy Chapoose, Geneva Accawanna (2004)

Elusive as they were, the more elders we worked with, the more we appreciated their stories about emotional connections to the landscape. It seemed that when we were in a location, surrounded by the cultural and natural landscape, including but not limited to plants, that stories and remembered traditions emerged. Elders Duncan, Taveapont, Wash, Arrum, and others reminded us that nature has an inherent ability to renew itself as long as we humans not only allow, but encourage, that revitalization to occur.

On plant gathering walks, we learned about the principle of reciprocity, of thanking the earth with prayer and tobacco offerings as we harvested a medicinal root, osha (a.k.a. bear root, also known as osha' or Porter's lovage [*Ligusticum porteri*]), berries, rose hips, and other plants. For the Ute, the world is sacramental and it is a world thoroughly impregnated with energy, purpose, and sense of creative natural forces; the Ute give gifts or offerings in and to locations where they believe their ancestors prayed or where plants were collected. We learned about respect for nature by the judicious use and harvesting of plants. The Ute seem to have tended the plant (including prescribed burning) and animal populations

on which they relied. Ute knowledge of what may have been sophisticated and complex harvesting and management practices has been all but lost. Nonetheless, there is much to be recorded and perhaps relearned (cf. e.g. Anderson 2005: 1-10). Significantly, like many others, we began to comprehend that as custodians of the land, we all are responsible for educating 21st century global citizens and that there is much that can be learned from indigenous peoples.



Fig. 2
Helen Wash and Loya
Arrum collecting osha,
offering tobacco (2004)

The second project, an outgrowth of the first, is the Ute Ethnobotany Project (2005-2008). A Centennial Service Challenge Grant based on the initial NPS grant proposal was awarded to the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest for the Ute Ethnobotany Project in 2005. The "project was designed to document and transmit plant identification skills between living Ute generations" (LaForge 2006: i) and was designed to accomplish four goals: first, to bring Ute youth and elders together in a field setting at recorded archaeological sites to identify and discuss plant use and associated practices; second, to create an herbarium catalogue with the assistance of the Mesa State College (now Colorado Mesa University) Biology Department to be housed at the Northern Ute tribal offices; third, to begin to identify plant communities that are associated with specific kinds of archaeological sites; and lastly, to compile a final report (not elaborated herein) of the accomplishments of this project, including an ethnographic overview of Ute plant use. Two field trips were conducted annually with the Northern Ute from 2006 to 2009 which brought youth and elders together in a field setting. Archaeologists and botanists or ethnobotanists were present at all site visitations to assist in the identification of cultural resources and species in specific plant communities;

elder Utes discussed Ute names and plant use and associated practices among themselves and with the younger tribal members who were present. Also, Crum and LaForge, as archaeologists, believed that it was important to connect the "dead past" with the "living culture of the Utes," and that plants were a good way to make that connection.

The second goal was to create an herbarium catalogue with the assistance of Walter Kelley of the Mesa State College Biology Department that would be housed at the Northern Ute Cultural Rights and Protection Office. An herbarium is not just a collection of dried and pressed plants; the first step in creating an herbarium is to identify and photograph plants in their natural setting. For example, Cletis Mart (Northern Ute) and Lynn Albers (ethnobotanist) identified the scientific and common names for manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula* ssp. *platyphylla*). In Colorado, this species is only found on the Uncompahgre and the Blue Mountain Plateaus.

The students were taught the methods of science: they took field notes, learned how to use GPS units, took photographs of the plants, learned to read maps to document the collection location (including elevation), learned about plant zones to describe habitat, and documented the date of the collection (since seasonality is critical), and each plant then was assigned a collection number. The plants then were carefully removed from the ground so that the roots, leaves, flower and/or fruit were intact. For example, Helen Wash (Cultural Rights and Protection, Northern Ute, retired) collected a sage specimen on the Uncompahgre Plateau while Kerry Cesspooch (Ute Bulletin, Northern Ute, staff) photographed the process.

From removal, to pressing, to drying, to long-term mounting and preservation – with appropriate labels – the process unfolded systematically. (Airtight cabinets were used.) Specimen labels including the collection number, the scientific name, common name, Ute name (if known), date collected, person who identified the plant, person who collected the plant, detailed location (including elevation), soil description, habitat, harvest period, and Ute usage were added. The back of the herbarium sheet was designed so that references to Ute traditions of the harvest, ceremonial uses, and the like could be added as new information is forthcoming.

It is the intention of this Ute Ethnobotany Project that the herbarium collection will be an on-going endeavor of the Ute Cultural Rights and Protection Office and that additional information on Ute uses and other cultural information will be added as they surface. The herbarium will provide a platform for elders and youth to continue to explore Ute traditions and language about plant use into the twenty-first century (cf. McBeth 2008).

The third goal, to identify plant communities that are associated with specific kinds of archaeological sites, is a bit more complex, but was also partially accomplished. The ma-



majority of field site visits were to plant communities that are associated with archaeological sites managed by the US Forest Service (USFS) Grand Mesa and Uncompahgre Ranger Districts, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Grand Junction Field Office and BLM McInnis Canyons and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Areas. The field visits on the USFS and BLM lands focused on known Ute sites in Mesa County, Colorado. These locations provided an opportunity to look for plants in lower elevation desert scrub and river riparian plant communities, through mid-elevation oak-brush, piñon-juniper woodland, and mountain shrub plant communities with associated seeps, springs, and creek riparian, to higher elevation ponderosa pine, aspen forest, and sub-alpine plant communities.

Without additional research it is difficult to offer conclusions here about the association of specific archaeological site types with specific plant communities. The environment surrounding the Grand Valley in western Colorado provides a diversity of species and seasonality, both of which were undoubtedly factors in site location, especially if the site was associated with plant exploitation. To date, archaeological evidence of plant manipulation in the study area, either for horticultural or potential domestication purposes, is limited. Although seed manipulation may be inferred by the presence of larger pollen (Conner and Langdon 1987), much work is yet to be done to make definitive conclusions about these associations that could then be extrapolated to similar sites.

A third project that integrates Ute ethnobotany was the Ethnographic Overview of Colorado National Monument. Located in western Colorado near the town of Grand Junction, the research for this project was carried on between 2006 and 2010 (McBeth 2010). Since there is such a sparse historical record of Native American presence in this area, Utes were invited into the monument to visit archaeological sites and examine plant communities. The reason for the dearth of information is that the Ute were pushed out of this part of Colorado in 1881, and only a few ethnographic observations were recorded prior to this time. No ethnographic research was done in the area before the Northern Ute were removed and relocated to what eventually became known as the Uintah-Ouray Reservation in Utah.

What this means is that there was a tremendous loss of Ute cultural knowledge that would likely have been associated with this area. Twenty-first century analysts must concede that the memories of any traditions related to the Grand Valley and Uncompahgre Plateau are elusive and fragmentary. Tattered memories and mostly-erased histories were at the center of this investigation. The Ute Ethnobotany Project was expanded to include the area around Colorado National Monument; this also meant that the funding provided by the National Park Service for original research was used to in-

clude paid consultants and collaborators. These included author Betsy Chapoose and Venita Taveapont (Coordinator, Ute Language Program, Northern Ute Tribe).

The fourth project is the Ute Learning Garden. This project started in 2007 when Laurie Reiser, an archaeologist and local Colorado State University (CSU) Master Gardener, became acquainted with Crum and LaForge's work on the Ute Ethnobotany Project. Reiser's long-time interest in native plant use prompted the three archaeologists to take the Ute Ethnobotany Project in a new direction—to create a garden for interpreting plants utilized by the indigenous people of Western Colorado.

In 2008 Curtis Swift, Director of the CSU Tri-River Extension Agency, received permission from Mesa County to use roughly three acres of bare land adjacent to the CSU facility's cactus garden and office. The partnership grew. With the critical help of Chapoose and Northern Ute Traditional leader Clifford Duncan, the partners planned a garden that would represent riparian, desert shrub, piñon-juniper, transitional, and alpine eco-zones. In 2009 Chelsea Nursery generously donated many of the native plants and the Ute students with Master Gardener guidance planted most of the plants. The BLM through an Assistance Agreement partnership with Tri-River Extension Agency paid for irrigation pipes, interpretive signs, landscaping, and ramada posts, while both partners donated hours of employee and volunteer time. A small garden of corn, beans and squash is grown to show how indigenous farmers, neighbors to the Utes, planted, harvested, and prepared their food. (The Utes occasionally grew small plots of corn, but were mainly hunters and gatherers). Manos and metates lie near the garden and are used by students as they learn how to grind their own corn flour and wild seeds.

In 2009 and 2010 Chapoose and Duncan brought students from the Uintah-Ouray Reservation in Utah to participate in "mini-pow-wows" (they even persuaded the local public to dance). Duncan gave the Ute students their first experiences in how to erect a tipi, and in how to build a wickiup, sweat lodge, and associated cobble hearth. Archaeologists from Dominquez Archaeological Research Group gathered poles for the wickiup project and discussed Ute archaeology at the public events, with a focus on wickiups and Ute sites that are found in Western Colorado. Master Gardeners served as garden docents. They were instructed by Northern Utes, archaeologists, and a local native corn farmer and gave tours to Mesa County school groups. At public events, the gardeners interpreted Ute culture and plant use.

Master Gardeners continue to maintain the garden but funding to bring Utes to participate in activities will be a future challenge. The garden may become primarily a learning opportunity for local school groups as they study Colorado history.





The Ute Learning Garden was the result of cooperation among many agencies and organizations. Ute students learned from their own elders more about their culture and it provided them with the opportunity to share specifics about it, imparting a sense of stewardship to the people now living in the heart of what was once their homeland.

The fifth project is the 2011-initiated consultation by the Northern Ute on the Denver Botanic Garden exhibit entitled "Native Roots, Modern Form: Plants, Peoples, and the Art of Allan Houser." The art of Houser (1914-1994), a Chiricahua Apache modernist sculptor, was the centerpiece of this exhibit. Advertised as a "multidisciplinary appreciation of American Indian cultural and botanical heritage" (Denver Botanic Garden web site 2012), it is described by Carol Berry, correspondent for *Indian Country*, in this way:

The core of the Native Exhibition will be "elders who can talk to us about the ethnobotanical uses of plants and their knowledge of cultural preservation" [citing an expert], stressing that although the presentation is of arts and horticulture, "driving them is cultural preservation" to retain Native knowledge that is being lost, particularly in urban areas (Berry 2010).

Native American media (especially *Indian Country*) has covered numerous examples of Indian focus on plants, health, and related legal issues (cf. Allen 2011; Valencia, et al. 2011).

In early April, 2011, Chapoose and Clifford Duncan, tribal elder, toured the gardens that were going to be utilized for the exhibit, "Native Roots/Modern Form: Plants, People and Art of Allen Houser," which opened on April 29th. Chapoose and Duncan discussed which sacred plants were appropriate to exhibit and interpret as well as those plants which would be inappropriate to reveal in a public setting such as the Denver Botanic Garden. Chapoose and Duncan discussed with the staff how the traditional use of the plants should be incorporated into the displays; the idea of possible trips to the garden with tribal elders, who might be willing to assist in identification and Ute interpretation of specific plants, was also broached.

THEMES IN CULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AND APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY

Four themes have emerged from the above projects that are relevant to the concerns of both tribal cultural resource protection and applied anthropology.

The first theme is cultural resource management (CRM) which is intended to protect and enhance Native cultural and natural resources. Not surprisingly, there seems to be little agreement about what cultural resources include. A broad definition states that cultural resources include "all elements of the physical and social environment that are thought by any-

body—a community, a tribe, an interest group—to have cultural value" (King 2003: 11).⁴

Chapoose believes that the responsibility of cultural resource managers lies in not only documenting and recording the historic and prehistoric "meanings" of the landscape for her tribe, but also protecting and conserving the resources through stewardship. Through a Ute lens, the continuum between the natural and the cultural worlds is seamless. Chapoose asserts that anthropologists must employ increased transparency (to the public) as we address key (to the tribal worlds) social concerns and that our accountability (to the tribes which have entrusted us with their traditional ecological knowledge) should be framed according to their concerns, not those of the academy.

Landscapes are a complex of interrelated and essential places of religious and cultural significance to the Ute. All the lands and elements of the environment within the landscape are related. Chapoose believes that the tribe has tried to communicate this to the federal agencies and is concerned that the issues are neither understood nor taken into account in decision-making processes. It is clear that the governmental analysis employed in this context focused merely on specific locations, which are but a fraction of the landscape. Chapoose asserts that this analysis is flawed. Current procedures and policies do not consider that these landscapes are alive and interconnected; the current problematical approach fractures the landscape into segmented pieces and therefore will endanger its continued use by future generations of practitioners of Native American religions.

Additionally, Chapoose believes that cultural resources create the foundation for Ute cultural landscapes; she is a strong advocate of re-establishing connections with ancestral homelands. Ute still collect plants and roots for weaving, construction, food, and medicine⁵ (e.g., willow for baskets, spring beauty a.k.a. wild potatoes and pine nuts to eat, and osha for medicine). The challenges of protecting the plant communities and advocating for a Ute reconnection are very real.

A second theme is that of re-establishing connections with ancestral homelands which originally comprised a vast territory of over one-third of what is now the state of Colorado. Whenever a tribal community is dispossessed of their territory and removed to a distant location, much traditional knowledge is lost. In 1881 the Northern Ute bands were removed from their western Colorado homelands to a reservation in Utah. Subsequently assimilationist institutions such as boarding schools and missions, and simply accommodation to the demands of the twentieth and now twenty-first century, generated tremendous cultural erasure.

The authors have long believed that we are capable of initiating, creating, and funding successful projects to work with the Native peoples to reclaim not only knowledge about our/their heritage land base, but also to establish reconnect-





tions to these ancestral homelands. Whenever a people are disenfranchised of their heritage, their sacred landscape, all of their reflections must be interpreted in light of this removal.⁶ While we strongly believe that we must maintain ethnographic integrity, we also believe that it is essential to work with tribes to develop culturally sensitive and honest ways to recoup lost traditions.

A third theme is language revitalization. While perhaps the most elusive, it is decidedly a worthwhile endeavor. We have created a physical connection to the sacred landscape by working with elders, whose recollections, reminiscences, and stories of plant use might be used to promote a linguistic resurgence. The Ute Ethnobotany Projects described herein have connected youth to ancestral Ute homelands with knowledgeable Ute tribal members. This has renewed an interest in recording these traditions, and learning plant names, vocabulary, and traditional practices in their Native language. Additionally, the preservation of plant-use traditions has, according to tribal members, sparked a concrete interest in preserving not only plant lore, but also the intimate and profound connections between a people, the ancestral landscape, and the voices of the elders.

At this point we can synthesize the above three themes as a rediscovery of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). Chapoose expresses the belief that the environment is more than a collection of resources—and as such is a comprehensive landscape that includes natural, cultural, and spiritual components. She is interested in exploring the relationships between the culturally created environments (archaeological sites such as game drives, wickiup and camp sites, vision quest sites) and physical environments (water sources, plants, available game). Additionally, she is curious about the possible existence of unique Ute cultural perspectives of the landscape that would include the botanical resources and their connection to distinctive cultural and/or historical experiences.

Related to this is the complex and sometimes elusive process of the social construction of sense of place, a topic which has generated a lot of discussion and publications as of late. Anthropologists Stewart and Strathern (2003: 1) note that “Ethnographers have realised from their field experiences how perceptions and values attached to landscape encode values and fix memories to places that become sites of historical identity.” The authors learned that the stories of the elders were not only expressions of ethnic identification and tribal sovereignty, but also of personal connectedness to the land. While their memories are fragmentary and elusive, stories emerge that serve to remind all of us that plants have the capacity to reveal secrets of the landscape.

Clifford Duncan, Northern Ute elder, discusses the importance of showing the proper respect for plants.

When we are looking for this spring beauty, Indian potato, my mother would tell us that when we get there that maybe they [spring beauty] won't be

there. We ask, ‘Why not?’ And she replied, ‘They move away.’ And the reason why they moved away was because we abused it. Maybe we didn't do right, and they moved out of the area, and then we have to go look for it again. But those that abused it—they're not going to find it because it moved away to another area.

We have to treat a flower or a plant, even a tree, in that they have same spirit that we have. All things are connected with the spiritual. Offerings differ with tribes. When you take the northern tribes, they use tobacco; most of them use tobacco. In between there's sometimes a mix too; or you could use any plant really which you consider to be sacred like fruit, like dried buffaloberries. ‘Here's a sweets for the spirit.’ Or eagle feathers can be used as spiritual gifts. Give something that you cherish and put that there. So offerings remain that way, even to a plant. Those are earlier ways of doing things (Duncan as quoted in McBeth 2008: 2010).

The spiritual life of plants is also discussed by Helen Wash, Northern Ute tribal member. Wash reflects on her experience on Grand Mesa in an area near a Ute trail:

I was thinking about that [Ute] trail up to the mountains. And just then, I saw this big aspen—I mean it was wide; I don't know if my arms could have gone around it completely, but it was huge, it was just wide, and I could see it from where I was sitting. So, I went up the hill to go see it, and when I was standing there, I just happened to look south.

Ohh, that hill side was just full of bear root. I thought, ‘Wow, this is so beautiful!’ Before I came back down, I prayed, and I thanked the Creator for letting me see that, and to let me know that our ancestors came through here long ago and to show me that sight of bear root—it was so beautiful.

It reminded me of when I was little. My mother knew a lot about plants. She knew it from her relatives, her cousins, her mom, and her sisters. They all shared their knowledge of what plants do this and that for you. One day, she said, “Let's go up to the mountains, and let's get some plants for the winter, in case someone comes and asks for some medicine.” So, we're up in the mountains, and I'm looking around like, “Gosh mom, there's nothing growing around here.” She said, “You see that plant over there?” And I thought, “Well, there's just that one, so why don't we just go?” She says, “No, no, just wait here.”

She stood facing east and prayed. I didn't know all of what she was saying, but when she got through

she said, "Okay, this plant right here. See it? We'll go over there and pick some." And, when I went over there, I just saw so many, I couldn't believe it. She said, "Don't take a lot of it," she reminded me, "just take as much as we'll need, and some to share with people we'll want to give it to."

She made me a believer of what plants can do for you, and that it adds beauty to the mountains, to the deserts—everything adds beauty. It's God's creation for us to enjoy, for us to take and share and to use as medicine or as food. For that I'm thankful, for my mother sharing that with me, and I'll probably always share that with people. We thank the Creator for all of that and we thank our ancestors for showing us the way. Even though they are no longer with us, their knowledge is passed down from generation to generation, to this generation—the now generation, the young people who came with us on this trip" (Wash as quoted in McBeth 2008: 14-15).

What the above stories demonstrate are Ute narrative traditions which include the land itself. Anthropologist Basso, Lakota activist Deloria, Kiowa poet and philosopher Momaday and others offer clues as to why and how the landscape can be read as a sacred text. Perhaps more of us in and out of the academy should seriously take up the recording of these stories instead of bemoaning the loss of tradition (cf. Basso 1996; Deloria 1994; Momaday 1969).

SOPHISTICATED NATURALISTS

While we can posit that cultural resource managers should be indebted to Ute traditional ecological knowledge, as far as our research has gone, we have learned that many plant collecting and plant management traditions of the Ute are lost. We are, however, optimistic that pharmaceuticals, utilitarian, and food collection techniques may still be retrieved, revived, and re-taught. Ecological restoration and wildland management, including those of historic and prehistoric landscapes, the control and eradication of invasive species, and the reintroduction of plant and animal species known to have inhabited a particular locale are part of the rich, largely untold, indigenous histories, which in turn are at the root of traditional ecological knowledge.

We have learned anew as Native Americans and applied anthropologists that lasting bonds are created through sharing stories. Storytelling is an essential part of being human, as it ignites the imaginative possibilities and awakens our cross-cultural understandings.

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NOTES

1 Portions of this manuscript have been vetted previously by federal agencies in reports written by McBeth (McBeth 2007; 2008; 2010).

2 *Ethnobotany: Evolution of a Discipline* (1995), edited by Richard Evans Schultes and Siri von Reis, provides an important introduction to the discipline.

3 A "Google scholar" search on traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) yielded 1,040,000 citations. We are aware that Krech (1999; 2005; 2007) does not necessarily eschew the concept of the "environmental" Indian, but he does take it to task, citing Pleistocene extinction, bison and beaver overkill, and some burning practices as case studies to make his point (1999). Krech carefully selects examples that indicate negative impacts on the natural environment. Not surprisingly he "proves" that Native people were responsible for overharvest, deforestation, and extinction of particular species. We do not necessarily assume that a respect for living things "translates automatically into conservation" (2007: 346), but we do argue that it does reflect a philosophy of respect, irrespective of some wasteful resource users.

4 As CRM archaeologists Stapp and Burney admit, "Cultural resources are many things to many people" (Stapp and Burney 2002: 5; cf. e.g. Harkin and Lewis 2007: 275-342). One significant component of cultural resource management is traditional cultural properties (TCP). The term TCP was originally defined as a property "that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (a) are rooted in that community's history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community" (Parker and King 1990: 381). The anthropological and related disciplinary literature includes numerous books and articles on CRM and TCP. We include the definition here in order to assist the reader in understanding the ways that our other definitions and concepts are negotiated across cultural, religious, and social boundaries. A note to the reader: a "Google scholar" search of cultural resource management (CRM) yielded about 2,120,000 books and articles. Traditional cultural property (TCP) yielded 1,230,000 and when pluralized to "properties" the yield was 1,460,000.

5 "Eighty percent of the world's population relies on traditional medicine to maintain its health" (Alcorn 1995: 27).

6 The reader interested in learning more about the ignominious removal of the Ute should consult Becker 2004 and McBeth 2010.

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The Benevolent Dictatorship in Rwanda: Negative Government, Positive Outcomes?

SHAWN RUSSELL

ABSTRACT

While Rwanda does lack some of the basic freedoms and civil rights that are considered essential to a nation, particularly by Western democratic powers, today it “works,” largely as a result of President Paul Kagame’s benevolent dictatorship, especially as seen through the lens of those things which are most essential for stability, security, and development in a post-conflict setting. This article evaluates benevolent dictatorships as possible solutions for governance in post-conflict environments for US policy makers. It also proposes ways the US can prevent or mitigate the effects of a civil war. It finishes by stressing that, despite some curbs on civil and personal liberties, Rwanda is much better off than many other countries in Africa, and that the limits to personal liberties, while unfortunate, are a small price to pay for the security and stability Rwandans otherwise enjoy.

KEY WORDS: benevolent dictatorship, dictatorships, autocracies, post-conflict governance

INTRODUCTION

By almost any indicator, Africa has the largest collection of countries with the lowest scores on international indices of stability, security, economic development, life expectancy, birth rates, and many others. According to the Foreign Policy’s 2011 Failed States Index, 19 of the 30 worst ranked countries in the world are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The 2010 Human Development Index (HDI), published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), shows 34 African nations (of the 48 total) in the bottom 41 countries of the world. According to the 2011 CIA World Factbook, 30 of the 35 highest HIV prevalence rates in the world are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The list goes on and on.

However, despite the dozens of countries ranking near the bottom, some African countries stand out for their high rankings – not only compared to their continental neighbors, but also in relation to other countries in the world. Botswana’s score in the “Corruption Perception Index 2011” is better than Italy or Poland, and almost as high as Spain or Portugal. Lesotho has a female literacy rate of 95%, higher than many countries in Central and South America (CIA 2011). But aside from quantifiable evidence, some countries just “feel” different.

From 2010 to 2011, I lived in Morocco, working at the US Embassy as an Active Duty US Army officer. I traveled throughout Sub-Saharan Africa while in training to become a Foreign Area Officer (FAO), and had the opportunity to visit 15 countries in the region, including Rwanda in January 2011. For a first-time visitor to Kigali, there is a stark difference when compared with other African countries such as Sierra Leone, Lesotho, or even neighboring ones such as Uganda. The streets are cleaner, houses are painted and

yards tended, and there are fewer of the 10-foot, broken-glass-topped security walls so emblematic of Sub-Saharan Africa. There are still street hawkers, to be sure; the difference was that in Kigali, instead of selling air fresheners for cars, they were selling copies of *The Economist*. Less anecdotally, the government in Kigali has overseen some of Africa’s most impressive growth since the end of the Rwandan genocide in 1994. This is especially impressive considering two factors: First, the turmoil and ethnic strife that were in place when the Paul Kagame regime took power after the 4-year civil war and 1994 genocide, in which some 800,000 to 1,000,000 people, mostly Tutsis and moderate Hutus, were murdered in the span of around 100 days. Second, the domestic turmoil and regional conflicts that seem to plague other African nations. As reported in *The Economist* (2010a), “Its GDP has doubled, albeit to a tiny \$5 billion, since 2005. Most Rwandans have medical insurance. Tax revenue may rise by 12% this year and GDP is expected to go up by 6%.” Foreign aid as a percentage of GDP has dropped from nearly 100% in 1994 to 50% today, and President Kagame wants to see it fall to 30% by 2017. Some of the foreign aid given after the end of the genocide is no doubt tied to Western guilt over their lack of intervention. But it is important to remember that foreign aid did provide an economic springboard for the government in Kigali to jumpstart the economy, while ensuring that foreign aid was viewed as only a temporary fix and not a long-term solution.

If Rwanda is indeed functional, and this condition is considered desirable for a nation (especially in a post-conflict setting as horrific as it was after the civil war and genocide that resulted in several million killed, wounded, maimed, and displaced), several questions need to be addressed. The most

important one, and the one that this article seeks to answer, is: Does Rwanda indeed “work”, and has the regime of Paul Kagame provided stability and security for Rwandans, while improving their welfare, since 1994? Compared with most other African countries, Rwanda appears to be more stable, secure, and prosperous, but is this really the case? Are these true indicators of recovery and success, so atypical in post-conflict settings in general, and in African nations in particular? Or are these simply window dressing, masking residual feelings of animosity that could flare up and shatter an illusion that the administration in Kigali has carefully built? Finally, how could knowing more about a perceived benevolent dictator allow the US government to prevent the occurrence of, or mitigate the tragedies associated with, a civil war, if there are indicators that the ends (a stable nation, decreased violence, and improved welfare) will justify the means (the conduct of the war, the potential for limited civil freedoms, and possible human rights abuses)?

This article concludes that the “benevolent dictatorship” of Paul Kagame has provided a positive framework for post-civil war governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, even if it is not truly benevolent. While there are definite shortcomings when it comes to human rights and civil liberties, it is Kagame’s focusing on the essentials of security, stability, and overall welfare that have allowed Rwanda to make the undeniable gains that it has. Finally, I explain how the US government supporting one side in a conflict, despite potential civil and human rights abuses, can possibly prevent a civil war, or at least limit the tragedies associated with it.

SO WHAT? THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A POSITIVE AND/OR NEGATIVE FINDING

The significance of a positive finding, that Rwanda does work because of a benevolent dictatorship, could have implications for US policy towards new regimes coming into power post-conflict. For the purposes of this article, I define a “benevolent dictator” as a ruler who does not necessarily follow democratic principles, but who uses his absolute power altruistically, to better the lives of his citizens and improve their existence; it is similar to the idea of “Enlightened Absolutism,” first put forth in the late 19th century by German historians (Ingao 1986). For a benevolent dictatorship to work, the ruler must truly act in the best interests of the citizens of that country, even if they do not put themselves in a position to remove him from power should he fail. Some examples of this benevolent behavior include declaring that a certain amount of taxes will be collected for welfare betterment, that a certain amount of GDP will be spent on health or education, and that certain behaviors, statements, or actions are illegal. Generally, these actions are ones that would either not come before a committee or panel for discussion because of their

perceived insignificance (i.e., prohibiting plastic grocery bags throughout a country), or would take a long time to debate and would end up being passed in a different form than they were proposed. A benevolent dictator, acting in the best interests of his people, will not put his ideas up for debate, but will instead simply declare them. Of course, we must be wary of any kind of dictator, as Lord Acton was right when he said, “Absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Morrell 1992). But a benevolent dictatorship may be “the best of what’s around” after a conflict.

There are a plethora of counterarguments to the idea of a “benevolent dictator,” the most obvious being that someone cannot truly be benevolent if they are a dictator. But if such a leader does exist, Washington should be willing to support him if that government reduces violence, reestablishes order and security, and creates improved conditions on the ground – even if civil rights and other liberties are more limited than in a true democracy. This is in stark contrast to US policy in the past, which seems to have supported the person able to sell himself as “most democratic,” despite a track record of decidedly un-democratic leadership after taking power.

The impact of a negative finding, that Rwanda does not work and that all progress to date is simply a façade for Western donors and investors, could have a greatly damaging impact on future post-conflict reconstruction efforts as investors and donors who thought they had “finally found a good one” might be soured on the prospect of later involvement. Unfortunately, if African nations are not able to secure assistance from Western sources, they may have no choice but to turn to others, like China, for funding. Chinese investment, already high in Africa and never without ulterior motives, could allow Beijing even greater influence in this resource rich and strategic region.

WEAKNESSES: RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There are aspects of the Rwanda question that this article does not seek to address, but that would indisputably contribute to a better understanding of the dynamic there. For one thing, it does not seek to analyze Rwanda’s actions outside its own borders: It is possible, even probable, that in the wake of Kagame taking power, the mass emigration of Hutus—guilty and innocent alike—allowed Rwanda to succeed by exporting problems and problem citizens, and that there is still ethnic tension (Burgess 2011). The ongoing conflict along the Rwanda-Congo border alone would appear to support this. Similarly, I do not address Kagame’s impact on the region, or pretend that it has been as positive as it has been domestically, as there is ample evidence that Kagame’s deployment of Rwandan troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) make him responsible for some of the same brutality as Rwanda’s own *Interahamwe* (although clearly not the

same scale). A United Nations report released in 2006 documented “over 600 major crimes including mass rape, targeted killings of civilians and other crimes against humanity from 1993 to 2003. The report implicates armed forces from Uganda and Rwanda in many of the crimes, suggesting that some may have amounted to genocide” (Onyiego 2010).

Data Availability

With regards to the information available, it is difficult to find records from before the civil war and genocide, since the Hutu regime sometimes destroyed them. In *Conspiracy to Murder*, Linda Melvern (2004: 57) notes:

Most of Rwanda’s arms deals were negotiated through the Rwandan embassy in Paris.... When the Genocide was over, extensive records were found in the Embassy offices, but not one of them concerned Rwanda’s relationship with France. All the documents related to this crucial aspect of the Genocide had been destroyed by Colonel Sebastien Ntahobari (Rwanda’s military attaché in France).

Another potential barrier to information gathering is rooted in Kigali’s policy prohibiting *ubwoko*, or tribal affiliation, in order to build a sense of “Rwandaness” after the conflict (US Department of State 2011). Consequently, the topic of ethnicity is extremely taboo and it is quite difficult to talk to Rwandans about their tribal affiliations. The former US Ambassador to Rwanda, W. Stuart Symington, tells the story about how one newly-arrived US Embassy employee, after asking a Rwandan about his tribal affiliation at a party, was declared *persona non grata* by the government in Kigali and departed Rwanda less than a week later. These laws, addressed in greater detail below, amount to censorship that prevents free discourse about the direction the country and its government are taking. When using data from surveys or interviews, this must be taken into account as Rwandans might alter their true answer or mask their true feelings. However, any research into the topic would undoubtedly benefit from a survey that simply addressed perceptions of democracy and civil rights relative to repression and a sense of freedom, which could then be followed up with focus groups and more detailed interviews.

Government-Provided Data

In Rwanda, as elsewhere, there is truth to the idea that “history is written by the victors.” The Kagame regime has gone to great pains to portray Rwanda as a success story, which has benefitted the country internationally. As such, there is no motivation to provide data that would convey a negative image or scare investors away. However, some researchers might not want to avoid these subjective evaluations, since much can be learned by assessing peoples’ attitudes in coun-

terpoint to the manner in which government data are presented. The subjective should be vetted against the objective.

Outliers

Additionally, researchers must identify outliers that could account for Rwanda’s post-conflict success. Undoubtedly, some of the praise – and accompanying aid – heaped upon Rwanda by the West since the genocide comes from a guilt-ridden world as a way to quell its conscience. Assessments of Rwanda also are made in relation to other struggling African nations, some of which are perpetually in a state of chaos and anarchy.

Mitigations

One way to mitigate many of the problems listed here is to analyze documents, books, papers, and studies authored by Rwandans themselves. However, as already mentioned, Rwanda limits free speech under the umbrella of preventing “genocide ideology” and “sectarianism,” a broadly-applied law widely criticized in the international community as a tool of political repression and a means of silencing legitimate critics of the government (Kinzer 2010). As British ex-pat Graham Holiday wrote in his “Kigali Wire” blog, “The blogging community, such that it is, consists mainly of expats blogging. Most of those appear to be transient, they’ll often only be here for a year or so and then they’re gone. So, there’s little to no effect. It’s rare to find bloggers within Rwanda blogging on these issues (of censorship)” (Mashuli 2011). Indeed, research I have conducted thus far has not identified a significant body of Rwandan authors, writers, or bloggers, and none of the stature of better-known African writers such as Nigeria’s Chinua Achebe (*Things Fall Apart*), Lesotho’s Thomas Mofolo (*Chaka*), or South Africa’s Alan Paton (*Cry, The Beloved Country*). Certainly, none are critical of the current government. A researcher’s true understanding of Rwanda is therefore limited by this dearth of first-hand resources.

A RECENT HISTORY OF RWANDA

Although it is easy to identify when Rwandan rebel forces crossed the Ugandan-Rwandan border, it is difficult to pin down the spark that ignited the Rwandan civil war between the two main ethnic groups. Tribal tension existed for years, with struggles resulting in power passing back and forth between Hutus and the Tutsis long before the Germans (and later the Belgians) claimed Rwanda as one of their colonies during the “Scramble for Africa” in the late 1800s. Surely the Belgians codifying their support for “the disenfranchisement of the Hutus and the reinforcement of ‘the traditional hegemony of well-born Tutsis’ ” in the 1930s did not help (Gourevitch 1998: 56). The Hutus, with a majority of the population, eventually formed the *Parti du Mouvement de l’Emancipation Hutu*

(Parmehutu), taking power after overthrowing the Tutsi-run government in November 1959, and Grégoire Kayibanda eventually won a UN-supervised election less than two years later. However, rampant corruption in his administration resulted in a military coup d'état in July 1973, and Major General Juvenal Habyarimana, a fellow Hutu, took power (Global Security 2011).

Shortly afterwards, as a result of the violent overthrow and increasingly repressive policies of the Belgian-administrated and Hutu-led Habyarimana government, around 130,000 Rwandan Tutsis fled to neighboring countries (Meredith 2005: 160). Although initially tolerated, these refugees soon made up a majority of the population in many areas, increasing tension over food, land, employment, and other limited resources. Eventually, a combination of host government xenophobia towards Tutsis, increasing Western pressure for democracy in Africa, and a longing for "the way it used to be" by members of the diaspora (almost 400,000 by 1991), resulted in some Tutsi clamoring for a return, by any means, to Rwanda (Meredith 2005: 530). It was from these refugees that General Fred Rwigyema formed a 4,000-man army that invaded Rwanda on 1 October 1990, officially starting the Rwandan civil war (Meredith 2005: 491). After three years of brutal fighting, and no lack of war crimes or human rights violations on either side, both parties met at Arusha, Tanzania in 1993, eventually signing a power-sharing agreement. However, further massacres of Tutsi prompted the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) to recommence their attacks, eventually putting more pressure on the Hutu-regime.

Tension came to a boiling point when President Habyarimana's plane was shot down on 6 April 1994, sparking the genocide (Meredith 2005: 507). RPF forces once again went on the offensive, eventually taking Kigali; Paul Kagame, until then the military leader of the Tutsi-dominated RPF, took charge. However, Hutu militias (referred to as *Interahamwe*, "those who work together" or sometimes "those who attack together"), fearing punishment and Hutu tribal members fearing retribution, fled the country in droves, eventually numbering two million and settling largely in the Great Lakes region, notably Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) (Gourevitch 1998: 93). Standing up a government-in-exile, they began a campaign to destabilize the Tutsi-dominated government, basing their operations out of the refugee camps and employing recently emigrated Hutu. Of the refugees crossing into Zaire, the UN Force Commander at the time, Lieutenant General Romeo Dallaire, writes in his book *Shake Hands with the Devil* (2003: 471) that:

The Zairians were finally disarming the RGF (Rwandese Government Forces, mainly Hutus at that time) at the border, stripping some of them of items such as machetes and rifles, but large weapons—artillery, heavy mortars, anti-aircraft guns and anti-

tank systems—were being waved through and escorted north of the city. Neither the Zairians nor the French were taking any measures to separate the militias, gendarmes or soldiers from the civilians as they crossed the border.

It was a situation that would hardly facilitate regional stability.

As a result of the attacks inside Rwanda that followed, President Kagame decided to send RPF forces into Zaire to counter the threat posed by the Hutus, beginning a series of wars subsequently dubbed the "First Congo War" and "Second Congo War." The latter, eventually involving nine African nations and resulting in the death of an estimated 5.4 million people, is referred to without hyperbole as "Africa's World War" (Economist 2010b). Echoes of it are still felt in the region today.

THE BOTTOM LINE: DOES RWANDA WORK?

In order to properly decide if Rwanda works, it is necessary to decide what it means for a country to "work." It cannot be merely stability, for totalitarian regimes can provide stability while citizens live in fear. It cannot be purely security, as a brutal military can be a tool of a one-party democracy. For the purposes of this article, I define a country as "working" by evaluating the most common metrics used by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-profits, think tanks, and government agencies. Because of the focus that Rwanda has gotten as a result of the genocide and the stability and rebuilding that followed, there exist copious amounts of data (quantifiable, qualifiable, and anecdotal) on which to base an assessment of Rwanda's status today. It is important to note that in most cases, the connection between the indicators below and the measuring if a country "works," is a corollary relationship, not a causal one. In other words, seeing a country increase its educational expenditures as a percentage of GDP, or witnessing very few coup d'états, does not cause a country to work; it could simply mean a tyrant is spending more money, or effectively using his security apparatus to quell any chance of a coup. But rather, there may be a correlation between a country that "works" and what is demonstrated by the indicators listed below.

Stability

"Stability" means there is as a continuity of governance at all levels, with little "likelihood that the established government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism" (World Bank 2010). Put more simply, there will be no "unscheduled" changes of government, and that when it is time for a ruling party to depart, as dictated by elections, constitutional mandate, or other means, its members will do so.



Continuity of Government

While continuity of government could be seen as an indicator of stability, in studying Africa one must delineate between “continuity of government” and “continuity of leadership.” A dictator who refuses to leave office might be providing a type of continuity, but this certainly does not indicate the kind of “political stability” we associate (e.g.) with 43 peaceful transitions of executive power in the United States.

Number of Coup d’État Attempts

Since President Kagame assumed power in 1993 (via coup d’état, ironically) there have been only two unsuccessful coup attempts (December 2008 and April 2010) (Rwandaonline 2009; Rwandarwabanyarwanda 2010), which are fairly insignificant. This is especially true compared with other African nations in that same period of time, for which coups—both attempted and successful—have been a way of life: Chad, Lesotho, and Nigeria each have had four attempted or successful coups d’état. Code d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Zimbabwe each have had five. The Gambia and Guinea each have had six, Mauritania and Niger seven, and Equatorial-Guinea an astounding 11 (Marshall and Marshall 2010). For Rwanda, this may indicate satisfaction with the administration, though more likely, as an effective security apparatus.

Invasions

There have been no invasions since General Paul Kagame invaded Rwanda (or “returned to liberate,” depending on your take) in 1990.

Insurgencies

There is an on-going fight in DRC and north-west Rwanda, directly related to the emigration of Hutus after Kagame’s RPF took charge in 1993. Many *Interahamwe* understandably feared retribution by the Tutsis because of the genocide and fled to neighboring Zaire (now the DRC). It is unlikely that those Hutus in command, made up largely of those facing the most serious charges in connection with the genocide, will give up either their fight or their units, and the conflict will continue for the predictable future, though without tangible threat to the regime.

Terrorist Acts Aimed at Overthrowing the Government

There are occasionally individual grenade attacks (the least committal in terms of conducting a systemic attack), most in Kigali and frequently cited as examples of Hutus continuing to target Tutsis, or extremists from both sides trying to destabilize the Kagame administration. But aside from the north-west region, there has been no large-scale fighting inside Rwanda since 1994.

Security

“Security” means having limited threats, both domestically and externally, to Rwandan citizens’ physical welfare (the most important *immediate* need for Rwandans—or anyone in these circumstances—in the wake of the civil war and genocide). While the terms seem similar, an issue of “stability” addresses attempts at destabilizing or overthrowing the government, while an issue of “security” addresses various attempts targeting the people of that country.

Crime Rates and Patterns

The US Department of State lists Rwanda’s crime rates as “medium,” and warns, “Attempted home robberies, automobile break-ins, pick-pocketing, purse snatchings, and theft of vehicle accessories in Kigali do occur, but most crimes committed in Rwanda are non-violent.” DoS goes on to state that drugs are not a problem, there is little evidence of scams, and notably for Africa, there are no “off limits” areas (Bureau of Diplomatic Security 2011). Of the 15 Africa countries I visited in 2010-2011, Rwanda felt by far the safest, possibly because of greater economic opportunity precluding the need to turn to a life of crime.

Numbers of Political Prisoners and Politically Motivated Executions

Although Rwanda initially used the death penalty to punish perpetrators of the genocide, the government outlawed the death penalty in 2007 (Amnesty International 2007). There remain miscellaneous reports of illegal detentions, holding of political prisoners without charge, and other abuses, though these do not appear to be widespread.

Limited Threats to Physical Welfare

According to the Rwandan Judicial Police, since 2005 “cases of murder have gone down 36%, rape and defilement 34%, and robbery 4.7%” (Asiimwe 2010). These improvements, as with “Crime Rates and Patterns” above, may be related to improved economic conditions benefitting the average Rwandan.

Incidents of Inter-Ethnic Violence

As mentioned in the above section on “terrorist acts,” there are extreme and irreconcilable members of both Hutu and Tutsi factions who continue to target moderates and members of the state opposition. Not widespread because of an effective security apparatus, this undoubtedly combines with relatively recent memories of the genocide to cause fear in the minds of some everyday Rwandans.

Improved Welfare

Initially less pressing than security concerns, but as important or perhaps more so in the long run, “improved wel-

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fare" is circumscribed by all the other issues a nation needs to address for its people to believe that things are getting better. This includes the metrics that can be hardest to measure (improvements to education and health, expanding freedom of press), but that conceptually indicate if life – wellbeing – is improving.

Food Security

According to *The Economist*, Kagame counts providing food for all Rwandans as his greatest achievement:

"For the first time in Rwandan history we have almost 100% food security." [Kagame] says his government has given villagers cattle, fertilizer and better seed. He reels off a list of crops that, he claims, have had record harvests: cassava, maize, rice, sorghum, sweet potatoes and wheat. "We're selling food to Burundi, Tanzania and Congo" (2010a).

Health

The government in Kigali has doubled health expenditures during Kagame's reign (from 4.5% of GDP in 1994, to 9% today), and this improved focus on health has resulted in lower crude birth rates (from 24.0 per 1000 in 1993, to 19.7 in 2009) and infant mortality rates (from 135.7 per 100,000 in 1994, to 59.1 today). Simultaneously, life expectancy has increased from a low of 26.8 years in 1993 to 54.7 in 2010. Access to improved sanitation facilities has increased (52.4% of the population had access in 1990, compared with 60.6% in 2009) (World Bank 2011a). HIV prevalence rates remain unimpressive, ranking the country as 25th on the continent, even if the number has declined slightly in the last couple of years (CIA 2011).

Education

This has been a mixed bag in Rwanda. The administration in Kigali has increased expenditures slightly (from 4.3% of GDP in 1999, to 4.9% in 2009), ranking 10th of the 35 African countries for which data were available in 1999, and 13th of the 33 countries available in 2009. Approximately 85% of youth are enrolled in primary school, and both males and females (ages 15-24) have achieved a 77% literacy rate. The percent of trained teachers greatly improved from 48.6% in 1999 to 93.9% in 2009, but during that same time frame, Rwanda dropped to the second highest teacher/pupil ratio in Africa, dropping from 54.2 to 1 in 1999, to 68.3 to 1 in 2009 (UNESCO 2011).

Economic Improvement

Per capita GDP has more than doubled under Kagame, from \$4,507 in 1994 to \$9,216 in 2010. But poverty remains a pressing problem, with no significant change in the past five years to the 58% of the population living below the poverty

line; 89% of people are living below \$2/day, and 76% living on \$1.25/day (World Bank 2011). Recognizing this, Kagame published his "Vision 2020," with ambitious but realistic goals for the country.

This economic project plans to boost GDP sevenfold, find paying jobs for half of Rwanda's subsistence farmers, nearly quadruple per capita income to \$900, and turn his country into an African center for technology, all by 2020. The government is doing what it can—it has, for instance, committed to investing annually 5% of its GDP in science and technology by 2012—but to reach those goals, it's going to need outside assistance (Chu 2009).

As a way to get this outside assistance to fund continued growth without accepting more aid, President Kagame is actively trying to attract foreign investors, and his efforts have paid off. The World Bank rated Rwanda "world's top reformer" in their 2011 *Doing Business* report, saying "Rwanda is the easiest place to do business in East Africa and the fourth best in Africa" (All Africa 2011). Kagame should also be commended for avoiding the "aid mentality" so prevalent in Africa; his approach was clearly reflected in the attitude and work ethic of the Rwandans I met.

Freedom of the Press

Earlier having ranked #107 in Reporters Without Borders' assessment (2010), its "Press Freedom Index" saw Rwanda drop over 60 places to #169 out of 178 in 2010. The organization stated that "Rwanda, Yemen and Syria have joined Burma and North Korea in the group of the world's most repressive countries towards journalists." A 2011 country report by Amnesty International notes: "The government used regulatory sanctions, restrictive laws and criminal defamation cases to close down media outlets critical of the government.... Some leading editors and journalists fled the country after facing threats and harassment."

Freedom of Expression

In the same report, Amnesty International wrote: "A clampdown on freedom of expression and association before August [2010] presidential elections prevented new opposition parties from fielding candidates." It continued: "The authorities continued to misuse broad and ill-defined laws on 'genocide ideology' and 'sectarianism.' The laws prohibit hate speech, but also criminalize legitimate criticism of the government."

Free and Fair Elections

"Labeled a staunch economic reformer by Western governments, but also called a ruthless dictator by his opponents and by human rights groups," Max Delaney wrote in August 2010, "Mr. Kagame is widely expected to win by a landslide,



at least in part because several of his opponents have been forbidden from participating and others have been killed in what rights groups and analysts suspect were assassinations.” He ended up winning 93% of the vote (BBC 2010). However, given how fractured the Rwandan political process has been in the past, Phil Clark proposed in *The Guardian* (2010) that while the Tutsi-dominated RPF is hardly loved in the countryside, many Hutu (who constitute around 85% of the population) view a vote for Kagame as a vote for continuing peace and stability – no mean achievement after years of violence. The whole stability of the country therefore depends on Kagame maintaining his status, and so repressive political acts can be an integral part of Rwandan progress. To maintain cohesion in a divided party, Kagame has struck out against relatively unthreatening targets as a show of strength.

Perhaps the Hutu fear the renewed retribution of a divided but hard-liner dominated RPF more than the repressive policies of a united but stable Kagame administration.

Corruption

In its 2010 “Corruption Perception Index,” Transparency International gave Rwanda a score of 4.1; this certainly does not put it on par with Sweden or Switzerland, but it is the 5th best score in all of Sub-Saharan Africa.

THE CHALLENGE: LIMITING THE TRAGEDIES ASSOCIATED WITH CIVIL WAR

If we believe that a country’s post-conflict success either (a) justifies US involvement to prevent a civil war, or if that is unsuccessful, (b) justifies the conduct of its civil war and the decisions that its leaders make afterwards, it is possible for US decision makers to better choose which side to support in a conflict. But could doing so actually limit the tragedies associated with civil war? Or would it only lengthen the fight and increase suffering? And will any peace achieved as a result last long enough to justify US support in the first place?

Supporting the forces that may provide the most stable and secure government afterwards, in order to help them to defeat their opponents quicker and more definitively, can limit the tragedies associated with civil wars. But in considering any theory about US involvement helping to mitigate the problems of a civil war, the first and perhaps most important question to ask is how to decide which side to support. Obviously, each case is different, and it is the job of analysts, defense officials, and policy makers alike to perform “due diligence” on both sides of a potential conflict in order to find evidence of how opponents likely will act during and after a conflict, how they would react to the US’s offer of support, and how benevolent each would be if in power. The US certainly has a

checkered history of supporting causes simply based on who was “the enemy of my enemy” at the time, with sometimes-disastrous results for the treatment of the citizens of that country and negative results for how those citizens viewed America. Obviously, this approach requires that the US be willing to ask the right questions of potential beneficiaries, and not to accept routine sycophantic answers. It would be a diplomatic problem, not to mention a moral one, if the military forces to which Washington provides material support use it to commit the same atrocities they professed to be fighting to stop. Similarly, if the outcome of a conflict in one country contributes to instability in a neighboring country or surrounding region, this may overshadow otherwise positive domestic gains as well. An honest and enforceable pledge by a prospective beneficiary to provide security and stability, even if done while delaying other civil rights and liberties, is preferable to an empty promise to create democratic institutions and full rights for all citizens, with no intentions to actually do so. As Rwanda has shown, the best path may be one that under-promises and over-delivers.

Part I: US Support Before a Civil War

Once the US decides which side to support, there are several ways by which US involvement in a potential conflict could help prevent a civil war. Ideally, war would not begin in the first place. This would no doubt be an even trickier proposition than choosing which side to support after the commencement of hostilities. However, it is possible that if the US were to throw all of its diplomatic and, as appropriate, military support – to include the backing of the UN, African Union (AU), or other applicable international body – behind one side as the clouds of war started to gather, enough collective pressure could be brought to prevent an outbreak in the first place. This would require a version of the “carrot and the stick” approach: The “good guys” would be offered a carrot (US materiel and diplomatic support) and the “other side” threatened with the stick (facing a better-resourced opponent, with those resources coming from the US). Conversely and simultaneously, the former could be threatened with a withdrawal of that “carrot” (for violations of international standards of conduct, during and after cessation of hostilities), while the latter could be offered a “carrot” in the form of concessions to some of their demands. This combination could be used to prevent hostilities and to address injustices, real or perceived, that led to the threat of conflict in the first place.

Part II: US Support After the Start of a Civil War

If unsuccessful at preventing a civil war, there are ways that US involvement after the commencement of hostilities could limit the tragedies associated with a civil war. First of all, supporting one side in a conflict can bring it to a definitive



conclusion through decisive victory, preventing more casualties from a protracted war, and setting the conditions for stability in the long-term. In "Ending Civil Wars" (2010: 35), Monica Duffy Toft rebukes a focus on immediate, premature settlements, debunking the false belief that "the more quickly the violence can be halted, the greater the number of lives that can be saved, and 'lives saved' is the only cost of consideration." This aspect requires US policy makers to have the political courage and long-term vision to accept that contributing to a bloody fight in the short term is preferable to an uneasy peace that results in greater conflict, and wasted efforts and resources, afterwards. Similarly, Edward Luttwak, in "Give War a Chance" (1999: 43), proposes that it may be best to allow combatants to conclude fighting, taking the conflict to its natural conclusion instead of stopping it prematurely. He states that

a cease-fire tends to arrest war-induced exhaustion and lets belligerents reconstitute and rearm their forces. It intensifies and prolongs the struggle once the cease-fire ends – and it does usually end.... Imposed armistices, meanwhile – again, unless followed by negotiated peace accords – artificially freeze conflict and perpetuate a state of war indefinitely by shielding the weaker side from the consequences of refusing to make concessions for peace.

Not getting involved soon enough carries its own consequences, as former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz recently wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* (2011):

The failure of the US to support the opposition [in Libya] more strongly...was a costly mistake. The delay in recognizing the National Transitional Council, the continuing delays in getting them access to frozen assets, and the refusal to provide arms made the conflict longer and bloodier...we are less able to support those who share our values.

All of this is not to say that letting the genocide happen was a necessary precondition for Rwanda's post-conflict success, but perhaps that letting the civil war play out after re-sourcing a "chosen side" may have been. It is possible that if the West had fully supported Kagame's forces, it could have brought the fight to a conclusion before the genocide even happened. Imagine a Rwanda where the civil war, brutal as it was, marked the worst point of the conflict, and not the genocide and the more than 800,000 additional deaths that followed. Had the US supported the RPF, there may have been a disciplined victory without a desire for revenge after taking power. As Chaim Kaufman points out in his 1996 article, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars,"

The Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) showed remarkable restraint during the 1994 civil war, but since then the RPF has imprisoned tens of thousands of genocide suspects in appalling conditions, failed to pre-

vent massacres of thousands of Hutu civilians in several incidents, and allowed Tutsi squatters to seize the property of many absent Hutus.

It is not difficult to picture the cycle of violence that this perpetuated.

Second, by receiving support from the US, combatants will not need to supply themselves at the expense of civilians, which can in turn greatly reduce the suffering of those who traditionally suffer most in war. Katelyn Jones explains: "Armed conflicts have decreased on the battlefield and increased in communities bringing the consequences of conflict into peoples' homes.... Whereas only 50 per cent of casualties were civilians in the Second World War, the figure is close to 90 per cent in more recent wars" (2011: 168). Civilians are truly "key terrain" for combatants; unfortunately, as a result of the decrease in traditional warfare and its associated conventions, there has been an increase in war crimes and crimes against humanity. Reducing the need for combatants to supply themselves at the expense of civilians would go a long way towards reducing the misery of those most defenseless. Further, if "our side" wins a more disciplined victory and does not cause undue suffering among civilians, it will be easier to gain domestic support for US efforts to provide resources to a "chosen side" in subsequent conflicts. This strong domestic support could further increase our influence, preventing even more civil wars or limiting the suffering associated with them as a result.

Part III: US Involvement After the End of a Civil War

Whether to prevent civil war or to limit its effect after conflict starts, US influence after cessation of hostilities could assist in a positive outcome to civil war in two main ways. First, the US can work with the new leadership, providing guidance and direction (and a bit of pressure, if necessary) to ensure that it governs in such a way as to identify and solve the root causes of such conflicts. This can create conditions that decrease the chances of conflict recidivism and prevent another outbreak of violence, which would cause even more casualties and greater suffering. This is not to say that good governance would be able to erase the memories of all the violence associated with this conflict. As described by René Lemarchand in his *African Affairs* article on the 1993 failed power sharing agreement in Rwanda, "It is hard to over-emphasize the intense fears and anxieties felt by most Hutu in the face of the RPF invasion, the mutual hatreds born of atrocities committed by invaders and defenders, and the climate of all-pervasive suspicion" (2006: 5). But it is a starting point for resolution of the underlying issues, and formulating a plan for moving forward.

Second, US involvement could be used to ensure that a "benevolent dictator" actually *remains* benevolent by applying pressure – again, using the "carrot" of support – for the

partner to establish the security, stability, and welfare described throughout this article. If not, again, the US support could be withdrawn, and a potential “stick” of sanctions or other punishment applied. A ruler would know that the stability of his position is assured by the support of the US government, and that this support is contingent on his conduct while in power; this influence could go a long way towards avoiding civil war, limiting of the tragedies associated with it, and preventing a return to it.

DICTATORSHIP TO DEMOCRACY: MAKING THE CHANGE

In the past, countries such as Brazil, Spain, Portugal, the Philippines, and Hungary have made peaceful (which is not to say “without contention”) transitions from dictatorship to democracy, and remain democratic today. Contemporarily, because of the “Arab spring,” we are currently witnessing additional examples of former dictatorships making the transition to democracy. Dictators like former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak rarely choose to transition their country to a democracy voluntarily and some remain in dynamic situations, with stability not guaranteed. But elections in June 2012 were judged free and fair, as were those in Libya (New York Times 2011). These developments, as well as others in the Middle East and North Africa, seem to support Carother’s argument about “Dominant-Power Politics,” which he admits can result in some stability. However, the risk remains that “the long hold on power by one political group [such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt] usually produces large-scale corruption and crony capitalism,” and a disaffected population may once again call for change, resulting in a return to conflict (2002: 12).

This therefore is not to say that the transition to democracy will be without conflict, which can result in the casualties a steady benevolent dictatorship may have been able to avoid in the first place. For one thing, a dictator could risk running afoul of his supporters in the elite and military establishment. As Paul Collier wrote, “reform might be dangerous. My friends, the parasitic sycophants with whom I have surrounded myself, might not put up with it” (2009: 29), and a violent struggle for power could ensue. Conflict can also come from the efforts of formerly repressed groups vying for newly-available power, such as after Ethiopia’s Mengistu Haile Miriam was overthrown, and minorities from the Tigray, Somali, Oromo, and Amhara continued to contend for position, sometimes violently (Harbeson 2005: 152). However, the circumstances of each of the above examples are unusual, and as with any case study, they cannot be used as unqualified evidence of likely outcomes for democratization in Rwanda. Further field research is necessary to determine more accurately the circumstances which would facilitate the successful transition from dictatorship to democracy there.

CONCLUSION

In 2011 Carina Tertsakian wrote for Human Rights Watch (HRW), questioning Kigali’s approach of accepting “economic development first, human rights later” by asking: “Would we be prepared to sacrifice our right to free speech or political participation for the sake of ‘reasonably equitable development’ or subjective ‘political stability’?” Despite this valid question, the majority of the metrics used to measure stability and security in Rwanda show a positive trend. While there are undoubtedly gains to be made with regards to improved welfare, and in particular more civil liberties and human rights, I contend that these are not the things that people in a post-conflict setting initially need most.

Where it gets tricky, however, is in determining when “enough” time has elapsed, and when a country is “ready” for the more liberal aspects of “improved welfare” like freedom of the press, a true multi-party democracy, the ability to criticize the government without fear of retribution, the right to a fair trial, and other rights. One study showed that the primary concern of most Africans is their daily economic situation (things like unemployment, poverty/destitution, and food shortage/drought), while less than 1% gave “democracy/political rights” as their biggest concern (Afrobarometer 2009). However, there is a threshold past which people who have grown used to only having their basic needs met begin to demand the greater freedoms which Kagame increasingly restricts. It is past this brink that a regime’s tolerance of opposition will be truly tested, as we have seen during the Arab Spring.

Dankwart Rustow earlier wrote, “in an age of modernization men are unlikely to feel a preponderant sense of loyalty except to a political community large enough to achieve some considerable degree of modernity in its social and economic life” (1970: 351). If “improved welfare” may be linked to Rustow’s “modernity,” Kagame’s continued rule may be contingent upon his ability to maintain the sense of community that thus far has been built on shared experience of the genocide. However, by 2020, 70% of Rwanda’s population will have been born since the genocide ended, and if levels of repression continue, there may come a time when this is not enough for the people to tolerate Kagame’s rule (Ruxin 2010).

Immediately following a brutal conflict like the Rwandan civil war and genocide, a “benevolent dictatorship” may be more beneficial, and more stable in the long run, than a pure, Western-style democracy with regards to establishing citizens’ basic rights. Rwanda under the current regime may never be a true democracy, though Kagame certainly does not seem to apologize for this. It may not even be an African version of it, with the four-term incumbent receiving 99% of the vote. But given Rwanda’s post-conflict success, Jack Chapman in *Think Africa Press* (2011) puts it succinctly:

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Kagame rules Rwanda with a strong centralized government, uncompromising in its management of the economy and willing to violate human rights.... [But] human rights violations are a small price to pay for Rwanda's remarkable progress. Kagame is a dictator. But as long as he maintains stability and delivers reasonably equitable development, he is the sort of dictator Rwanda needs.

Other African nations, given the challenges of development they contend with, might be able to benefit from the same kind of dictatorship.

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TELLING THEIR OWN STORIES:

INDIGENOUS FILM AS CRITICAL IDENTITY DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

Over the past century, anthropologists have claimed primary authority regarding authentic filmic representations of indigenous peoples. The emergence of indigenous films since the 1980s—as well as changes within the discipline—have challenged the ethical grounding of such ethnographic representations of the “other.” Unlike the emphasis of ethnographic filmmakers on cultural explanation, many indigenous filmmakers currently engage a critical identity discourse that effectively addresses the complex historical and contemporary contexts of indigenous peoples. This paper contrasts Dustinn Craig’s (*White Mountain Apache*) experimental film, *4 Wheel War Pony*, with anthropologist Jerry Leach’s *Trobriand Cricket* in order to demonstrate how indigenous and ethnographic films can differ strikingly in their treatment of similar subject matter. With complex hybrid subject positions, indigenous filmmakers are often well positioned to critically engage the most challenging issues facing native communities today. These films also highlight limitations of disciplinary notions of the insider–outsider distinction, ethnographic holism, and objectivity in visual anthropology.

KEY WORDS: indigenous film, ethnographic film, critical identity discourse, visual anthropology

If someone is interested in the subject of indigenous peoples, then why not get it firsthand? Because that is the truth, and it is from their *experience*, instead of someone else looking in at them. There are a lot of dangerous things that happen when someone is not telling their own story. In a sense, Indians just become props in the films (Sterlin Harjo [*Seminole/Creek*]).¹

INTRODUCTION

Anthropologists have historically claimed primary control over “authentic” visual representations of indigenous peoples through ethnographic film. However, disciplinary changes, as well as the proliferation of films made by indigenous peoples since the 1980s, have challenged this ethnographic authority. In response, many anthropologists have incorporated increasingly reflexive and collaborative methods. As ethnographers expanded the involvement of interlocutors within the film process, some began to hand the camera over to indigenous peoples to make films of their own.

Sol Worth and John Adair’s *Through Navajo Eyes* (1972) project was an early attempt at engaging with indigenous-produced film. These anthropologists were interested in whether the Navajo had a recognizable visual grammar, and if so, intended to discover it through the analysis of their films (Heider 2006:47–48). The Navajo films were subsequently analyzed as a window into the insider’s perspective—essentially emic data—used to support anthropological arguments. In the decades since, hundreds of indigenous films have been produced, both independently and in association

with anthropologists. Unlike ethnographers—trained to analyze distinct cultural groups from an outsider’s perspective—indigenous filmmakers, with personal experiences and complex relationships to home communities, are well positioned to engage in a critical indigenous identity discourse, such as is developed in Sandy Grande’s *Red Pedagogy* (2004) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999).

Indigenous identities—especially when framed through binary conceptions of purity and authenticity—are deeply enmeshed within the most serious challenges to native communities today, including youth risk behavior, community membership, and intergenerational trauma. The subject position of indigenous filmmakers within liminal identity spaces that transgress and challenge insider-outsider distinctions, have been able to engage these contemporary issues, while ethnographic filmmakers (generally speaking) remain biased toward outsider analyses of distinct categories within bounded groups. Indigenous films implicitly challenge the relevance of these disciplinary film traditions in their ability to address relevant indigenous issues. It is imperative that anthropologists engage indigenous films *not* merely as insider perspectives, but rather as critical works that often present valid and valuable complementary perspectives to ethnographic films (Ginsburg 1995).

Through a comparative analysis of Dustinn Craig’s (*White Mountain Apache*) *4 Wheel War Pony* and anthropologist Jerry Leach’s ethnographic film *Trobriand Cricket*, I argue that the subject positions of these filmmakers have resulted in radically different interpretations of relatively similar subject matter. I posit that indigenous filmmakers are gener-

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ally better positioned to address issues of identity, which reside at the heart of many of the most critical contemporary issues for native communities. Finally, I offer suggestions for further critical anthropological engagement with indigenous film.

A HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS FILM

Worth and Adair's Navajo project was innovative in that, for the first time in anthropology, films created by indigenous peoples were seen as having academic value. Unlike the work of early ethnographic filmmakers, Worth and Adair were interested in what the Navajos themselves would visually document and imagine, rather than outsiders. This project emerged within a time of great change in ethnographic film history. Beginning in the 1950s with Jean Rouch, the role of the ethnographic filmmaker in objectively documenting and analyzing cultures was being challenged. He was particularly influenced by Robert Flaherty, the early documentary filmmaker known for his Inuit film, *Nanook of the North* (1922)—with his controversial penchant for blurring the borders between fact and fiction in cinema.²

Rouch's *cinéma vérité* style—displaying and interrogating the role of the filmmaker and the editing process—contrasted with the majority of earlier films, in which a seemingly omnipotent and omnipresent narrator commented on a culture, such as in the work of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, John Marshall, and Robert Gardner (Rouch and Feld 2003). By the 1970s, prominent ethnographic filmmakers, including Tim Asch, Barbara Myerhoff, and Sarah Elder were experimenting with interactive and reflexive techniques that broke the illusion of the ethnographic present (Lutkehaus and Cool 1999:120). In addition, filmmakers including Leach began acknowledging issues of colonization and cultural hybridity.

Many early indigenous films grew out of ethnographic film projects. For example, later in their careers, Tim Asch and Terence Turner both encouraged and trained their previously filmed subjects to produce their own films (Asch et al. 1991; Turner 1995). The availability of inexpensive video equipment in the 1980s made indigenous film production feasible without the involvement of anthropologists. Regional organizations, including Native American Public Telecommunications, were formed with the explicit goal of spreading and supporting local indigenous media productions. The increased quantity and production value of these films led to a rise in independent and indigenous film festivals in the 1990s, which have been instrumental in the process of disseminating and promoting native films, helping many to achieve commercial success, including *Smoke Signals* (1998), *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (2001), *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002), and *Whale Rider* (2002) (Wood 2008).

However, despite the diversity of indigenous films to date, anthropological discussions of these works have primari-

ly focused on “the social relations of image production and consumption (as well as) the cultural idioms through which indigenous producers and artists appropriate filmic mediums” (Poole 2005:170). In the present context in which many indigenous filmmakers have attended film school and lived betwixt and between a variety of communities, the focus on indigenous aesthetics and the filmmaking process has limited discourse to the cultural practices of distinctly defined groups. Faye Ginsburg has suggested that this:

lack of analysis of (indigenous) media as both cultural product and social process may also be due to our own culture's enduring positivist belief that the camera provides a ‘window’ on reality, a simple expansion of our powers of observation, as opposed to a creative tool in the service of a new signifying practice (Ginsburg 1995: 258).

The paucity of critical engagement with indigenous film relates to a larger pattern of holding native peoples to a double standard regarding their personal and academic works. This is partly a result of “the whitestream notion of Indian as romantic figure, not Indian as scholar and social critic—a predisposition that works to favor cultural/literary forms of indigenous writing over critical forms” (Grande 2004:102). Grande notes that:

Bookstore shelves are brimming with Native legends, poems, novels, and short stories, but are relatively barren of critical studies of contemporary American Indian life. In short, the obsession with identity politics has pressured American Indian intellectuals to succumb to the vision of who they are supposed to be instead of who they are (2004:104).

Both Grande and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn have discussed their own experiences of simultaneously receiving eager requests for their life stories along with skepticism of their critical works’ “objectivity” (Cook-Lynn 2008:336). For indigenous peoples, Grande maintains that “the game is rigged” in that the left-essentialism rampant in many sectors of academia and the arts has valued their cultural experiences while negating their ability to produce credible critical works (Grande 2004:103).

Debates around the postmodern crisis of representation in anthropology have addressed how ethnographic attempts at objectivity have proven problematic, both ethically and methodologically (Lyotard 1984; Marcus 1990).³ However, maintaining distance from one's subject has at times been productive for anthropologists in reducing their research bias. Harris stresses the importance of using scientific methods in order to “get it right” (1999:60). He maintains that the deconstructive and imaginative methodologies used by many postmodernists have led to biased and obfuscated conclusions (1999:157).

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Charged with these criticisms, postmodern scholars have conversely criticized previous ethnographic traditions, and the larger culturally situated project of science itself, as being fundamentally colonial itself (Foucault 1984; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Thornton 1988). In an ironic Catch 22, the more an ethnographer engages intimately with their subjects in order to decolonize methodologies, the more they seem to risk projecting their own (possibly essentializing) fantasies onto their work.

To avoid such a paradox, ethnographic filmmakers have historically tended toward addressing topics that lend themselves to less subjective topics. Analyses of the structure and function of cultural practices—and more recently studies of power and the effects of colonialism—have worked particularly well within an insider-outsider model. As “outsiders,” ethnographers are in some ways better positioned to consider cultural practices within a larger context than individual actors. However, this has biased ethnographic descriptions toward focusing on cultural features that can be studied through this distanced methodology—generally omitting groups and topics that deal with complex subjectivities.⁴ Asch describes this shortcoming specifically in relation to ethnographic film:

Anthropologists have a special advantage, being outsiders to a culture. The distance from their subjects as well as the comparative framework of the discipline afford anthropologists a privileged understanding that insiders to a culture rarely seem to have. Moreover, the discipline in *methodically* studying culture yields insights that are different from the more intuitive insights that insiders have. At the same time a goal of anthropology has been to understand and represent, as much as possible, the insider's point of view. Yet in reflecting upon the accomplishments of the field of ethnographic filmmaking, I cannot avoid the *conclusion that we have, by and large, fallen short* of the goal of making visual records that convey aspects of culture at once from the insider's point of view and with the privileged understanding of cross-cultural knowledge... The reasons for our lack of success, I think, have to do mainly with the facts that *our own biases and preconceptions ultimately cloud our ability* to see and say anything about another culture from an insider's point of view, and our relative outsider status means that *we can never really know enough to be able to represent aspects of another culture the way they are experienced by members of that culture* (Asch 1991:103, *italics mine*).

As the issues relating to complex identities are among the most subjective aspects of culture, they do not lend themselves readily to anthropological methods. However, they do address a long-term disciplinary mission, described by Bronislaw Malinowski as grasping the “native's point of view, his relation

to life, [and] his vision of the world” (1922:290). While it is difficult for ethnographers to address issues of identity in isolated groups, it is even more challenging to engage hybridized indigenous identities.

If these aspects of culture were methodologically inaccessible, then this discussion would be a moot point. However, contemporary indigenous films are positioned particularly well to critically engage with liminal and hybrid identities. In the past, anthropologists such as Worth and Adair considered indigenous films as emic data: treating the selected Navajos as a representative sample of a distinct group (Ginsburg 1995:67). The connection of contemporary indigenous filmmakers to a multiplicity of communities and traditions positions them neither as members of a homogeneous group, nor as pure insiders or outsiders, what Bryan Brayboy and Donna Deyhle describe as the “dual position” of an “insider-outsider” (2000:164).

A useful way of discussing ethnographic and indigenous filmmakers is through Richard Kurin's conception of the *culture broker*, which “captures the idea that these representations are to some degree negotiated, dialogical, and driven by a variety of interests on behalf of the involved parties” (1997:19). The insider---outsider position of many indigenous filmmakers enables them to serve as cultural brokers based on their own experiences and community relationships. While ethnographic filmmakers may be more “scientific” than their indigenous counterparts in some ways, their methodologies and subject positions tend to severely limit such a critical engagement with identity.

Human beings are driven not only to struggle to survive by making and remaking their material conditions of existence, but also to survive by making sense of the world and their place in it. This is a cultural production, as making sense of themselves as actors in their own cultural worlds. Cultural practices of meaning making {performative subject constitution} are intrinsically self-motivated as aspects of identity-making and self construction: in making our cultural worlds we make ourselves. At least for those who have moved out of economic subsistence, perhaps the balance has tipped from instrumental to expressive struggle, so that humans are concerned more with the making of their cultural world than with the material world. Even in their material struggles for survival, they grapple with choices in “how to go on,” so as to deal with the maintenance of a viable cultural identity and its distinction and acknowledgement from others (Willis 2000:xiv).

Not only have indigenous peoples struggled for material survival, but centuries of systemic attempts at cultural annihilation by colonial powers have resulted in complex and multifaceted identity politics. However, multiculturalist and post-modernist discourses have generally failed to address the

unique postcolonial contexts that inform contemporary indigenous identities. Grande, a leading scholar on Native American identity and political thought, has discussed the unique challenges of addressing indigenous identity discourse in *Red Pedagogy* (2004). She argues that Western models based on left-essentialism and postmodernism are inadequate, and that:

[There is] a need for an indigenous theory of identity – one historically grounded in indigenous struggles for self-determination, politically centered in issues of sovereignty, and spiritually guided by the religious traditions of American Indian Peoples. The aim is to develop an emancipatory theory – a new Red pedagogy – that acts as a true counterdiscourse, counterpraxis, counterensoulment of indigenous identity (2004:95).

Grande admits that postmodernists have helped to “uncover the ways in which... ‘universalist’ theories have operated to normalize whiteness” (2004:101). These scholars have also articulated how “identity is shaped and determined by social and historical contingencies, not by some checklist of innate, biological, or primordial characteristics” (see de Lauretis 1989). However, the assumption of many postmodernists that individuals are “struggling to define their place within the larger democratic project” does not correspond to the priority of many indigenous peoples of political and cultural sovereignty (Grande 2004:98). The vast majority of multiculturalist scholarship—usually dealing with migration or immigration—is focused on how individuals fit into systems of power. Conversely, many indigenous peoples are more concerned with fending “off the global capitalist forces that crave indigenous cultures (while) at the same time... (operating) to destroy all that sustains indigenous communities” (2004:107). Grande describes how much of postmodern scholarship “primarily serves white America” and how “the notion of fluidity has never worked to the advantage of indigenous peoples” (2004:112).

Indigenous peoples “are neither free to ‘reinvent’ themselves nor able to liberally ‘transgress’ borders of difference, but, rather, remain captive to the determined spaces of colonialist rule” (2004:113). In order to move beyond the “reduction of difference to matters of discourse,” Grande suggests a critical engagement with the ways in which hybrid identities “both further and impede indigenous imperatives of self-determination and sovereignty” (2004:115). Ultimately, Grande’s development of a Red pedagogy “operates at the crossroads of unity and difference that defines this space in terms of political mobilization and cultural authenticity, expressing both the interdependence and distinctiveness as tribal peoples” (2004:118).

In her work with Australian Aboriginal media, Ginsburg discusses how film in particular has been able to serve as a

medium for indigenous peoples to not only engage in identity discourse, but also self-conscious identity *production*:

For Aboriginal producers, the goal of their media work is not simply to maintain existing cultural identities, what some Aborigines have called the ‘cultural refrigeration’ approach. The production of new media forms is also a means of cultural invention that refracts and recombines elements from both the dominant and minority societies.... Young Aboriginal people who are or will be entering into production are not growing up in a pristine world, untouched by the dominant culture, nor do they want to assimilate to the dominant culture. They are juggling the multiple sets of experiences that make them contemporary Aboriginal Australians (Ginsburg 2002:283).

TECHNIQUE IN FILMMAKING: LEACH VS. CRAIG

To operationalize these ideas, I apply the previously discussed critical indigenous identity discourse to both an ethnographic and indigenous film. Both Leach’s *Trobriand Cricket* (54 min.) and Craig’s *4 Wheel War Pony* (10 min.) present the appropriation of a Western-associated activity by an indigenous group, resulting in increased cultural sovereignty. Leach’s film is on the adaptation of the game of cricket by Trobriand islanders in response to British colonization, while Craig’s film explores the relationship between Fort Apache reservation skateboarding culture and the pre-contact Apache warrior system. *Trobriand Cricket*’s traditional ethnographic film style stands in contrast to with *4 Wheel War Pony*’s experimental juxtaposition of film, images, and animation. A stark difference exists between Leach’s omniscient narration and Craig’s virtual lack of any spoken words. Despite their emphases on similar topics, these films differ greatly as a result of their respective filmmakers’ subject position and relationship to the filmed community.

Trobriand Cricket (1976), as noted above, was produced by anthropologist Jerry Leach (with the help of filmmaker Gary Kildea) and was one of the earliest ethnographic films to engage issues of cultural hybridity (Leach 2002). As in Rouch’s *Les Maîtres Fous* (1959), Leach addresses the response of indigenous peoples to colonization. However, unlike Rouch’s work, the film follows traditional ethnographic conventions that, ironically, serve to reinforce cultural holism. This is in part due to the relationship of Leach with the Trobriand peoples.

As the primary architect of this film, Leach maintained a strictly scholastic association with the Trobriands. Studying this group for his dissertation, Leach conducted extensive participant-observation and archival research on these islanders. The Trobriand Islands represented a particularly crucial position in the history of ethnography, serving as the location of

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Malinowski's seminal work on the Kula ring (1916). As if in homage to Malinowski, *Trobriand Cricket* is a manifestation of the idealized Malinowskian ethnographic tradition: an anthropologist, who had done extensive ethnographic fieldwork with a particular bounded culture, identifies an interesting cultural practice and conducts a functionalist analysis. Leach demonstrates this through extensive footage of the cultural practice including some insider perspectives by Trobriands. Through this methodology, Leach is able to illustrate how the Trobriand version of cricket embodied many of the rituals previously practiced in Kayasa war games. For example, Leach describes how it is guaranteed that the visiting team always loses the game, as is customary in Kayasa (Leach 2002).

While *Trobriand Cricket* follows traditional ethnographic film methods, its engagement with culture change does distinguish it from previous ethnographic films such as Marshall's *The Hunters* (1956) and Gardner's *The Nuer* (1971), which assumed a timeless ethnographic present (Heider 2006:101). However, the presentation remains deeply problematic. Leach's framing of Trobriand culture change is itself homogenizing. There is minimal engagement in the film with how colonization has fractured and reformulated identities variably between individuals and groups. This incorrectly implies that the subversive appropriation of cricket led to a distinctive cultural victory for the Trobriands over colonizing forces. In addition, the interviews in the film are sparse and highly structured; we do not get a sense from Trobriands of their general perspective on the game or what they think is important about it. Furthermore, the audience is led to believe that this cricket game occurred by happenstance, when in fact it was "specifically enacted for the camera team by the members of a local political movement, who at the time of filming were seeking an ascendant role in the Trobriand politics" (Weiner 1977:506).

Ultimately, this lack of engagement with issues of identity has dire consequences; it permits Leach to exclude the larger political Trobriand context. A shocking omission is any discussion of the indigenous Kabisawali movement, which began in 1968, and was engaged with particularly violent conflict with the colonial government during 1973, the year of *Trobriand Cricket*'s filming. While this movement was indeed anti-colonial, it also promoted some development and even assisted in setting up a bank, a hotel, as well as cultural tourism ventures (Jolly 2003). This complexity of identity and divisions within Trobriand society did not match Leach's framing of this game as a powerful symbol of cohesive resistance to colonization.

Narrative and self are inseparable in that narrative is simultaneously born out of experience and gives shape to experience. Narrative activity provides tellers with an opportunity to impose order on otherwise disconnected events, and to create conti-

nunity between past, present, and imagined worlds... Through various genres and modes... narratives bring multiple, partial selves to life (Ochs and Capps 1996:19).

Many indigenous filmmakers have been able to engage issues of identity, because they are intimately connected with relevant personal experiences and native communities. Unlike Leach, Dustinn Craig has not attempted to create distance to his subject. Rather, like Rouch, he includes images of himself: skateboarding, with his family, working on skate park construction, as well as filmmaking. Framing Craig as an "insider" in relation to anthropologists as "outsiders" would be a vast oversimplification. While Craig has strong ties to his home community, he is also a formally trained filmmaker, has lived in many cultural contexts, and has conducted academic research on Apache history and culture. It is his experience both within and outside of his home community that has enabled him to engage complex identity issues.

Craig spent much of his childhood on the Fort Apache reservation and has remained active in the community. Throughout his twenty years of skateboarding experience, he has been mentored by older Apaches and has himself mentored two generations of youth skateboarders. Craig has also spent much of his life in the Navajo capital of Window Rock (he is also Navajo), as well as other non-reservation urban areas around the country. He has also conducted in-depth scholarly research into Apache history for the 2009 PBS documentary *We Shall Remain: Geronimo*, which he directed and produced. Frequently referencing Keith Basso's *Wisdom Sits in Places* (2006), Craig has been deeply interested in the relationship between Apache and Western ways of knowing. He makes the case that connecting the present with the past in Apache society is crucial for imagining futures for his community:

There is this whole world that the Apache used to live in before conquest. It was like a bubble of reality and everything happened inside that. Today we live in a different bubble. All of our anger about the bubble, our hopes, dreams, everything today is in that bubble, even if we rebel against it. We can't go back to how it used to be. All we can do is realize that that is where we came from and use that knowledge to create a new bubble in the future that will be neither like the old one or the current one (Craig 2008).

4 Wheel War Pony is born out of this perspective and is about more than a mixture of cultures. It also addresses possibilities for the production of future Apache identity:

On the surface, this film may seem to depict White Mountain Apache youth borrowing pop culture in place of their own, when it is actually their ancient Apache culture of young men, manifesting itself

within skateboard culture, resulting in a very distinct blend of two cultures that are both indigenous to the Americas (Craig 2008, mission statement).

While Leach meticulously articulated the function of the cricket game, Craig leaves the meaning of his film open to interpretation. In his film, footage of youth skateboarding in the reservation skate park is juxtaposed with archival Apache photographs, as well as reenacted footage of Apache scouts in a rapid-fire experimental style. There are also moments in which the scouts themselves are skateboarding, framing skateboarding within Apache cultural traditions as opposed to the United States subculture. However, by not explicitly defining the nature of these connections, Craig challenges the viewer to actively construct the specific meaning. While the primary goals of ethnographic description have been to accurately document, analyze, and present cultures as they are, the identity discourse contained within his film challenges viewers to critically engage stereotypes while imagining new possibilities of being.

Craig purposefully breaks the illusion of the ethnographic present. While the scouts are sometimes presented as stoic, in other scenes they are shown as laughing and playing with skateboards and toy guns. This choice was a conscious response to the PBS film he made on Geronimo, in which he felt pressured to portray white fantasies of Apache history. As Edward Said argued through the concept of *orientalism*, for these well-meaning producers, “the exotic is already known” (1978). Craig (2008) remarked: “It was great having the good public television deal, money, time and a staff, but after a hundred years I still couldn’t tell my own story.”

4 *Wheel War Pony* has been able to engage in Grande’s Red pedagogy in ways that ethnographic films such as *Trobriand Cricket* have not. Craig’s film frames issues of acculturation, colonization, and hybrid identities as actively navigated by Apaches. Leach presents the Trobriands as a cultural whole, forced to cope with and adapt to outside systems of power. While acknowledging culture change, it does so while “normalizing whiteness,” re-essentializing the Trobriands in light of these changes (Grande 2004:101). Conversely, Craig centers his analysis from an Apache perspective—in a nuanced and problematizing manner—which leads him to interpret the skateboarding culture largely as an expression of local traditions. By framing Apaches as individual agents of their own destiny within a complex historical context, Craig presents a landscape of possibilities for current and future Apache identities. This contrasts starkly with Leach’s homogeneous Trobriands, whose actions are framed primarily as reactive to Western influences, thus reinscribing their “otherness,” rather than critically engaging novel identities and changing perspectives on critically important and relevant Trobriand issues.

Increasingly, indigenous individuals around the world are intimately connected to multiple communities and, consequently, challenged with navigating manifold cultural selves. As a result, many of the pressing issues that indigenous communities face are directly connected to the hybrid and liminal identity spaces that indigenous films critically engage. Such representations are not only theoretically significant as discussed, but more importantly are practically relevant to indigenous peoples, as they address contemporary community issues.

Craig’s exploration of Apache skateboarding engages the high rates of depression, drugs, and suicide among the teenaged male youths on the Fort Apache reservation. As the complex system for gaining adult male status was largely dismantled during colonization by the United States government, Craig discusses how skateboarding has been able to foster a community that performs a similar social role. However, as his film does not present these issues in explicit narrative, it is necessary for the viewer to either have a background in the topic, read the filmmaker mission statement, or to attend a festival screening in which Craig introduces and explains this film.⁵

Craig addresses the risk rates for youth on the Apache reservation, which are broadly relevant to Native Americans; as a population, people on reservations face some of the worst risk rates of all youths in the United States. They “have the highest suicide rates of all ethnic groups ... and suicide is the second leading cause of death for American Indian and Alaska Native youth” (Duran and Duran 1999:573). Reservation youth are also faced with extremely high levels of interpersonal violence (Bearinger et al. 2005:270). In addition, Native American “youth tend to initiate substance use at a younger age, continue use after initial experimentation, and have higher rates of polysubstance use” than the general population (Beauvais 1992).

Eduardo and Bonnie Duran argue that researchers studying Native American issues of risk behavior have ignored issues of identity confusion and disparity (1995:178). They maintain that for native youths considering suicide, “the person’s relationship with the sacred is nonexistent, and suicide serves a purpose similar to that of alcoholism ... [filling] a hole.” This is supported by the work of Bearinger et al., whose longitudinal research has identified that belonging to a prosocial peer group is the most correlative protective factor against negative risk behaviors (2005:270). Arthur Brief and Stephan Motowidlo define prosocial behaviors as “positive social acts carried out to produce and maintain the well-being and integrity of others ... such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering” (1986:710).

The Apache skateboarding community has provided a prosocial environment for the teenage male youths on the Fort Apache reservation. In a discussion I attended, Craig argued that young men “need a shield from the bad parts of society

they are prone to falling into” and that the skateboarding community—whose members pledge to refrain from alcohol, drugs, and violence—provides a setting for these prosocial protective factors. This is supported by Craig’s own experience on the reservation: “When I was in high school there was this older skateboarder who didn’t drink, and that had a huge impact on me. He looked out for me and in a way he was a shield for me.” Craig noted that indigenous films will not serve as a panacea for these issues, but argued that they are vital for drawing attention to, and engaging in, discourse on present realities and potential futures for the Fort Apache youth:

It’s a very charged film for me on many levels. It represents a lot of pride but it’s laced with a lot of despair. Lots of those kids are dead. They’ve committed suicide. They’ve committed homicides. They’ve had their remains scraped off the highways from drunk driving related accidents. Some of them are survivors. Some of those kids are completely washed away by alcoholism and drug addiction. So you are seeing these young men in the prime of their lives. There is a resilience and a strength (Craig 2009: Denver Indigenous Film and Arts Festival Q & A session).

Craig’s critical engagement with Apache hybrid identities in this film demonstrates the active role that Ginsburg (2004) describes as reimagining indigenous identities. Facing some of the highest rates of suicide, drug use, and violence (even among Native American reservation communities), the identity issues of youths on the Fort Apache reservation are literally life-or-death concerns. By drawing upon traditional Apache beliefs and customs, and melding them with contemporary reservation realities, Craig is able to play a productive role in encouraging Apache cultural futures that also actively undermine destructive essentializing identity discourses. While indigenous films vary greatly in style and tone, what they share is an engagement with indigenous identity, not only interacting intimately with contemporary issues, but also proposing possibilities for addressing them.⁶

The focus of ethnographic films on distinctive populations and cultural features makes them generally less effective at speaking to relevant indigenous issues. To reframe this point within the US context, I argue that Leach’s lack of engagement with the complexity of the Trobriand political and cultural context would be akin to a film on the US civil war, focusing entirely on how the Confederate forces altered their flags, uniforms, and military traditions in light of secession. While such a film would be interesting to some, certainly foreign anthropologists, it would have little relevance to the concerns and experiences of the people involved.

Ultimately, ethnographic and indigenous films are able to critically engage different aspects of communities. Ethnographers’ more distanced analyses position their films to investigate cultural dynamics whose purposes and meanings are

often less clear to the people who live within them than they are to outsiders. Appropriately, there is an active discourse regarding the ethical issues of such work. Bill Nichols has argued that at their worst, ethnographic films have been “about a desire to know other people and other cultures... and making other people elements in the ethnographer’s arguments” (Loizos 1993:206). The ethnographic filmmaker Jay Ruby has even argued that the time for outsider anthropological visual representation of indigenous peoples has passed (1995:78). While there are many valid critiques of specific ethnographic films, we should resist the temptation to reject them indiscriminately.

Instead, these films should be judged by their sustained collaborative involvement with the community throughout the film process, rather than the lack of such involvement in the past. Furthermore, there has been a recent influx of ethnographic films, and related scholarship, that do attempt to engage identity and community-defined issues.⁷ However, despite the ability of indigenous films to critically deal with identity discourse and contemporary indigenous issues, there has been relatively little anthropological engagement with these films as *critical works*; rather they too often continue to be pigeonholed as data, art, biography, or an insider’s perspective.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I suggest productive areas of research for further engagement with indigenous film as critical identity discourse. While these films may be discussed as a whole—in this case to contrast them generally with ethnographic film—there are multiple subgenres and local film traditions that remain undeveloped in the anthropological literature. For example, many indigenous filmmakers are drawing on road trip, horror, and western Hollywood film genres, as well as others. Development of critical analytical frameworks is needed to understand the ways in which these filmmakers follow and more interestingly, subvert genre conventions. Recent indigenous science fiction films are particularly promising, in light of this genre’s propensity for social critique via the imagining of dystopian futures and extraterrestrial encounters.

Furthermore, indigenous film festivals are ideal and heretofore understudied fieldsites for such anthropological engagement, because the attending filmmakers are available and generally pleased to discuss their work. These festivals are ethnographically rich both on and off screen, where introductions, Q & A sessions, and receptions inform one not only on the filmmaker’s perspective, but also their interactions with audiences and festival organizers (Lempert 2011).⁸ An excellent and rare example is Kristin Dowell’s (2006) work with the NMAI film festival. As anthropologists continue to critically engage with indigenous film, filmmakers, and film festivals, it is essential that analyses be grounded in contemporary issues whenever possible. In order for anthropological scholarship to

remain relevant to indigenous communities, it is imperative that we move beyond any limiting disciplinary conventions that serve to hinder a deep and critical engagement with indigenous film.

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NOTES

¹ Throughout this paper, I quote indigenous filmmakers. Unless otherwise specified, these are taken from personal interviews during the 2009 Denver Indigenous Film and Arts Festival as part of my M.A. research through the University of Denver (Lempert 2011).

² Flaherty's role in the history of ethnographic and collaborative film is complex. On the one hand, he was among the first filmmakers to live for years with an indigenous community. He even showed his films to the Inuits to get their feedback, an important precursor to collaborative filmmaking (Heider 2006). However, he is also charged with fictitious staging that projected noble savage stereotypes. For example, in one scene in *Nanook of the North* (1922), an Inuit man seemingly cannot understand what a record is (despite the fact that the Inuits listened to Flaherty's record player often) and bites it three times, presumably to see if it is food.

³ The debates surrounding postmodernism are vast and necessarily generalized for the purposes of this paper. Postmodernism in anthropology is typified by scholars that are concerned with the possibility of ethnographic objectivity and power disparities between researchers and their subjects. The category is problematic as it can—at its most inclusive—include such divergent scholars as Geertz, Foucault, Marcus, and Gupta. However, for the purposes of this article, such a generalization is useful in contrast to the critical concerns of many indigenous scholars.

⁴ Furthermore, ethnographic claims of "first or early contact" are often less cohesive and "pure" than we are led to believe (Thornton 1988).

⁵ Due to the non-narrative structure of Craig's film, previous knowledge is particularly important. However, it is generally the case that for outsiders, indigenous films will require more engagement beyond the screening than will ethnographic films, which are targeted toward outsider audiences and tend to assume little or no knowledge.

⁶ While I focus on a single film in this section, there are numerous indigenous films that also engage critical identity discourse and community issues. For example, in my masters thesis (Lempert 2011) I explore several of these films, incorporating personal filmmaker interviews. Here I briefly note five representative examples: (1) Tracey Deer's documentary, *Club Native* (2008), on debates surrounded blood quantum, "racial" intermarriage, and membership on the Mohawk Kahnawake reservation, (2) Sterlin Harjo's *Barking Water*, a feature exploring the elderly native experience and reservation poverty, (3) Janelle Wookey's short, *Mémère Métisse* (2008), on issues of intergenerational shame and discrimination of métisse, or partly indigenous Canadians, (4) Reagan Tarbell's documentary, *Little Caugnawaga: To Brooklyn and Back* (2008) on the complexities of Mohawk identity for the families of skyscraper builders in New York City, and (5) José Luis Matías and Carlos Peres Rojas' documentary, *Under the Open Sky* (2007), detailing the community negotiation of wages and social benefits by poverty stricken miners with the Canadian transnational company Goldcorp Mining.

⁷ It is not within the purview of this article to survey the vast amount of scholarship on collaborative ethnographic filmmaking, nor the increasing number of ethnographic films that are deeply collaborative, though this is a related

and important discussion. For excellent engagement with these topics, see Asch (1991), Elder (1995), Ginsburg (1995), Heider (2006), Lutkehaus and Cool (1999), Myerhoff (1978), Ruby (1995), and Turner (1995).

⁸ From my interview experience for this research, the ImagiNative festival in Toronto emerged as a particularly respected and interesting festival for indigenous filmmakers, and I suspect it will make for an excellent field site, especially for engaging experimental films.

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COMMENTARY

COLLABORATING IN REPRESENTING: ALWAYS POSSIBLE? ALWAYS DESIRABLE?

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ABSTRACT

Reflections are offered on personal participation in two cases in which anthropological actions and expertise were regarded as playing a prominent role in actualizing indigenous rights. Case number one concerned the Navajo-Hopi land dispute. Case number two involved documenting ancestral uses of river resources in response to Shoshone and Paiute assertion of water rights. In each of these cases, tribal stakeholders urged anthropological collaboration with their goals and strategies. Collaboration has become much more prominent in applying anthropological expertise in developing and actualizing human solutions to human problems in the last twenty years. Discussion reflects on the degree to which the collaborative imperative was desirable and possible in these cases.

KEY WORDS: land and water rights, tribal history, ecology, Native Americans

I want to pose two conundrums for anthropologists representing the perspectives and life situations of Native Americans. Case number one concerns a legal case set up by historical circumstances, government neglect and inaction, and tribal government agitation for restitution. This case pitted one tribe against another. The second case concerns a legal case set up by historical circumstances, government neglect and inaction, and tribal government agitation for restitution. This case pitted the U.S. Government against itself.¹

CASE NUMBER ONE

In 1989 I was asked by the American Anthropological Association to participate as a member of the Panel on the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute, formed as an ad hoc committee in 1984. I replaced Fred Eggan who resigned from the panel when he was elected to the AAA Board of Directors, noting possible conflict of interest.² I was already more familiar with the situation than I ever wanted to be, and my sympathies lay with Hopis of the "traditionalist" persuasion who not only opposed everything the Hopi Tribal Council did and also any attempt to interfere in Hopi life on the part of the U.S. Government on principal (see Clemmer 1994; 1995:166-202), but who also truly hoped that their unsanctioned negotiations with some of the more adamant communities of Navajos living on Hopi land, such as the Big Mountain community, would result in a compromise solution to various problems. Hopefully this would address the primary issues—grazing, jurisdiction, and religion (see Clemmer 2005)—mediated by themselves and not by a federal court, or decided by the U.S. Congress.

But in fact it was a series of federal court decisions that brought the situation to Congress, which finally did decide the issue.³ Without embroiling discussion in a complicated set of historical detail, suffice it to say that, in response to a lawsuit brought by the Hopi Tribal Council's lawyer, John

Boyden, back in the 1950s, the federal district court in Arizona assumed jurisdiction over the issue. Boyden argued on behalf of the Hopi Tribal Council that Navajos had invaded and trespassed on the Hopi reservation after it had been created in 1882. The Navajo Tribal Council's attorney argued that Navajos had been there all along in 1882, and that no matter, the Department of the Interior had essentially recognized Navajos' rights to the reservation when the BIA created grazing districts and committees for the Hopi and the surrounding Navajo reservations in 1942. Only one grazing district on the Hopi Reservation was designated as exclusively Hopi, although one grazing district on the Navajo reservation was designated with grazing rights for some Hopis as well as Navajos. All the rest of the grazing districts on the 1882 Hopi Reservation were designated as "Navajo".

The Court basically agreed with the Navajo attorney's arguments, declaring that the Hopi and Navajo had joint and equal interest in, and ownership of, the surface and subsurface, that is minerals, of the 1882 Hopi Reservation outside of District Six. It created what amounted to a separate reservation, the "Joint Use Area" (JUA). But in 1971 Boyden went back to the Court and argued, successfully, that neither Navajos nor the Navajo Nation nor the Department of the Interior had initiated any "good faith" initiatives or regulatory action to implement the Court's ruling. Navajos, he argued, had almost exclusive use of the "Joint Use Area". They had increased not only their use of the Joint Use Area but also their presence on it through population increase on the part of humans and livestock. The only evidence of "sharing" was a lease orchestrated by Stewart Udall, the Secretary of the Interior that gave Peabody Coal Company *carte blanche* to exploit coal and water resources in, what was for a while, North America's largest open-pit mine. The exploitation resulted in wholesale destruction of prehistoric pueblos and

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kivas, floral and faunal habitats, and the homes and grazing areas of several hundred Navajos.

This time, the Court agreed with the Hopi Tribal attorney. Largely due to the efforts of then-congressman John McCain, the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act of 1986 essentially partitioned the JUA into two equal acreages: one exclusively Hopi and the other exclusively Navajo. Minerals remained in joint ownership. Navajos and Hopis living on the "wrong" side of the dividing line would have to move. The Act established a Relocation Commission to implement relocation.

Simple, wasn't it? If you are a Hopi or a Navajo in the wrong place, just move. Well, it was not so simple. Relocation was a quagmire of frustration, suffering, intransigence, accusations and counter-accusations, and generally escalating conflicts. Into this quagmire waded the American Anthropological Association. Slowly becoming aware of the work of applied anthropologists outside of academia, the association acknowledged a considerable body of "gray" literature and anthropological expertise on forced relocations, including a report commissioned by the Navajo Nation by anthropologist Thayer Scudder (1979). This tardy (and perhaps slightly guilt-ridden) acknowledgement of forced relocation as an anthropological problem, combined with a considerable number of association members who had done research among the Navajo, resulted in passage of the following resolution at the 1983 annual meetings:

The Association, ... mindful of the potential human cost of the proposed solution to the Navajo-Hopi land dispute, urges a solution to this conflict by negotiation between the two tribes, with a minimum of intervention by the US government. To this end, we ask the Board of Directors to establish a commission to study the situation and report ... on ... the role ... the AAA should play to help facilitate the above described situation. (American Anthropological Association 1984:1)

This resolution seemed to anticipate an active anthropological presence in the situation, but fell short of authorizing action by the "commission" (later called the "panel"). Nonetheless, partisans within the association and without urged partisanship on the part of panel members, and certainly the panel embraced an obligation to present the viewpoints of Hopis and Navajos along with reporting on the statistical facts of the relocation process and the degree to which negotiation was proceeding and succeeding. (It was neither proceeding nor succeeding.)

Ultimately the 1986 deadline for relocation came and went without any forced relocation. This was largely due to the fact that the Act had provided for additional land to be added to the Navajo Reservation for the relocates, but as of 1986 no land had been provided. By 1989 that land had, in fact, been identified and Navajos who refused to relocate were regarded as having no excuse.

Consider this 1989 testimony by the Chairman of the Hopi Tribal Council to the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee: "The first and overwhelming priority of relocation must remain the relocation of Navajo physically residing on Hopi partitioned land." Now consider Navajo testimony to the same subcommittee:

We stand before you to state our opposition to the relocation of Navajo people from the lands which have been their homes for many, many generations. Suppose, you who are Christians, that there were only certain places where Jesus could hear your prayers or help you, and that anywhere else, you were at the mercy of Satan. Suppose that ... someone were to expel you from the lands ... and that you could never go back to the place where your prayers could be heard (Navajo Nation 1989).

Again, the perspective of the Hopi Tribal Chairman, just prior to the anticipated, but un-enforced, 1986 deadline: "What if a stranger moved into your back yard using violence and declared to the world, 'Your house is now my house, and I will never leave.' ... What if this same stranger had sheep and goats which ate your crops and did extensive damage to your badly needed land" (Sidney 1986:1).

The range was now, in large part, overgrazed and damaged, but the effects of forced relocation were not one-sided. Hopi Tribal officials also accused Navajos of ignoring directives to move their livestock from Hopi land, smashing and vandalizing machinery, shooting at and chasing Hopis, harassing and intimidating them with verbal threats, dismantling Hopi corrals, cutting fences, and destroying vehicles. "The Meek Shall Inherit the Earth Unless They Are Hopi Indians" proclaimed a multi-colored pamphlet issued by the Hopi Tribal Chairman's office (Sidney n.d.). In counterpoint, a Navajo woman targeted for relocation lamented, "Our way of life is our religion, and our teaching. If we are relocated by force, we will all die slowly. The people would not be in balance with Mother Earth and Father Sky and the spiritual people. In every way, here we are connected to the land. We belong here" (Veterans Peace Convoy 1990). Further, an advocacy group in Denver invited sympathizers to "join in a charge of genocide in the forced removal of Navajo people" and to ask the Department of Justice "to investigate and prosecute those responsible under ... the Genocide Implementation Act passed by Congress" (Denver Big Mountain Support Group 1989).

So who were the *real* "good guys"? The gentle people connected to the land, threatened with death and spiritual destruction (but who smashed cars and waved pistols around)? Or the "meek" who were being trespassed on and intimidated by alien foreigners (but insisted that people be forcibly disconnected from their life and religion and put at the mercy of the Navajo equivalent of Satan)? Surely this is a classic case of a colonizing power turning two groups of the colonized

against one another. But anthropologists within the association and outside partisans urged activism in the service of ameliorating the "human cost." It was just not clear whose cost was greater.

One commenter presented a paper at the 1987 meetings charging, "Anthropologists are ... providing a partial view of the dispute, through ignorance or suppression of data supportive of the other party to the dispute.... Anthropologists have ... presented almost exclusively the Navajo position.... Anthropologists have lined up with... the Navajo" (Washburn 1989:738, 739). Another commenter alleged in the Newsletter in 1989, [the panel's] "implicit claims to neutrality are a disservice to the Association, its members and the Hopi people...The lack of information on Hopi viewpoints is attended by a scarcely veiled bias in favor of Navajo relocates and against Hopi opinion" (Whiteley 1989; cf. Colby et al 1989).

The panel replied, in part, "Since Navajo relocates outnumber Hopi by a ratio of 100 to 1, the reports tend to deal extensively with that relocation" (Colby, Aberle and Eggan 1989). But that did not satisfy yet another commentator, who complained in a subsequent Newsletter that simply because Navajo relocates outnumbered Hopi ones did not justify giving more space in the panel's reports to the problems and issues of Navajos (Lieberman 1989).

Should the panel have given equal word counts to the Hopi and Navajo perspectives? Or should the panel have joined in the accusation of genocide against Navajo people? In the end, the panel was certainly always the bearer of bad news in its reports, undoubtedly satisfied no one, and surely made everybody grumpy. In the words of panel member David Aberle, "...the description of conflicts in value-neutral terms is probably impossible. The inclusion of all the facts that anyone might consider relevant is certainly impossible. The Panel's account of the Navajo-Hopi conflict was as objective as we could make it...." (Aberle n.d.).

CASE NUMBER TWO

The second case is much different. It involves representing a group of people's ancestral subsistence activities in the near absence of ethnographic data – or even, it might be said, in contrast to ethnographic data. The case involved Western Shoshones living on a reservation that were studied by two anthropologists in the 1930s. Jack Harris⁴ was most interested in acculturation and Julian Steward was, it might be said, almost obsessed with subsistence. But Steward only seemed obsessed with subsistence of one kind: the hard-scrabbling efforts of groups of Western Shoshones and their ability to wrest a living from unpredictable pine-nut harvests and occasional locust drives, the pursuing of elusive antelope herds, and the trapping or clubbing of rabbits and packrats.

This group of Western Shoshones and their Northern Paiute partners, in contrast, had mounted a case that focused on

water and water-based resources, specifically, fish. Under its trust obligation, the Government's Justice and Interior departments took on the case against off-reservation water users on the one hand, and the U.S. Government itself on the other, for failing to protect the tribes' water. The case entailed documenting Shoshone and Paiute rights to water that had been diverted off the reservation by non-Indian users in the early years of the 20th century and also documenting how Shoshones and Paiutes had used water-based resources, that is, fish, from the Snake River and its tributaries where salmon spawned (see Netboy 1974:265). The BIA eventually constructed a dam on one of the streams flowing through the reservation in the 1930s to capture water for irrigating pasture. At the same time, the Bureau of Reclamation began plans to build four 100-foot-high dams on the lower Snake River, completed between 1962 and 1981, adding to a series of smaller dam constructions begun in the early 1900s. The effect of these dams was to irrevocably bar salmon from running the Snake as well as the smaller tributaries feeding its upper reaches (McClure 2000). The tribe wanted acknowledgement of its ancestors' use not only of water, but also of the fish in it, looking toward the possibility of restoring the fishery on the basis of an anticipated settlement.

I was called in as an expert witness. The challenge was to assemble information supporting claims not only to the lost water but also to the fish that had once swum in it. Doing so entailed documenting that ancestors of the Shoshones and Paiutes on the reservation had not only formerly used the water that had been diverted off the reservation, but also had relied on fish from the Upper Snake and its tributaries for subsistence in the earliest times of the reservation and for decades prior to the reservation's creation.

Here is the sole mention of fishing in a reservation stream made by Jack Harris (1940:39-40, 88):

"In pre-reservation times Western Shoshones had lived in small communities along the Humboldt River in the winter months and in summer they became migratory, ranging from southeastern Oregon to the middle Snake River in Idaho and to the north. They set traps and nets in the river to catch fish as well as gathered seeds and hunted. The area on the Snake River between its confluence with the Owyhee and Bull Run was regularly inhabited each summer by the same man and his family."

Julian Steward (1938:165-9) devoted all of thirty-one sentences to discussing salmon in the seven-page section on the Snake River in his Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups. He gave almost no details on capturing, consuming or preserving them, aside from saying that fishing was their "principal subsistence." He stated that Shoshones "cached" "stores of salmon" (Steward 1938:165); took them with nets, hooks, dams with weirs and spears (Steward 1938:167, 168-



9); and that four or five families cooperated in construction of a dam that was owned by the director of the construction.

In his general discussion of subsistence, Steward devoted two and a half pages (1938:40-43) to a detailed discussion on types of fish and where they occurred, but evaluated in his summary section on "Ecological Determinants" that Western Shoshones' primary subsistence activity was "plant harvesting" (Steward 1938:232). In his half-paragraph discussion of Snake River resources, he said only that although the salmon "afforded considerable food" and the catch was "dried for winter," the salmon catch was rarely enough to keep families "in plenty" for the rest of the year. Steward (1938:168) did confirm Harris' noting of seasonal transhumance: "Sometimes, if the salmon catch were good, people from both the Snake River and the Humboldt River wintered on the South Fork of the Owyhee River...."

So I had to supplement Steward—that is, I had to reconstruct this northerly group of Western Shoshones and Northern Paiutes in terms of what one of their most important resources had been. The resource was not pine nuts, nor pack rats, nor grass seeds, but rather, *fish*. Steward had quoted from five sources—explorers' and trappers' journals from 1811-1845. They presented short but richly ethnographic descriptions of Indians living and fishing along the Snake River, as well alluding briefly to a report by an ichthyologist from the 1890s (Steward 1938:166,168). These trappers' and explorers' journals turned out to be a cornucopia of information. For example, although Steward quoted from John C. Fremont's diary, it was Fremont's cartographer, Charles Preuss (1843:91-93) who provided a telling description:

Below [Shoshone] Falls, the fish rise in such multitudes that the Indians can pierce them with their spears without looking.... One hears nothing but the word *hagai*, "fish".... On the opposite shore these "fish Indians" are singing their inarticulate and unmelodious songs.... They are as fat as hams; it must be the salmon.... Their bellies and behinds are so fat and round that they can hardly navigate.

I suspected that emigrant diaries would also mention fishing Indians. I had researched diaries of emigrants taking the Humboldt road to California and reasoned that there must be diaries of emigrants headed to Oregon along the Snake River road. Sure enough, there were. This description by Father Honore-Timothee Lempfrit, travelling in 1848, noted at "Little Salmon Falls":

Today several Indians came to visit us, bringing with them an enormous quantity of salmon. I bought one weighing nearly thirty pounds for six fishhooks.... Salmon is their staple food and one sees this spread out to dry in every part of their cabins.... The Indians catch their salmon in those parts of the river where the water flows most swiftly. They build a

kind of dam over which the salmon must leap in order to make its way up river. The Indians keep watch for them, and at the precise moment that the salmon readies itself to spring forward they spear it (Lempfrit 1848:148).

The Reverend Father was offered native caviar salmon eggs that had been dried and "firmed up in the shape of loaves so that they can be eaten during the course of the year." He "tasted some of this confection but could not bring myself to swallow even the little that I had in my mouth so revolting was its stench" (Lempfrit 1848:114). I found nearly forty diaries mentioning Indians fishing for salmon within the territory designated by Steward as "Western Shoshone."⁵

CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions can be drawn from these two cases? First, we should not presume that baseline ethnographies necessarily represented the totality of "aboriginal life." Or if they did so, then they should be taken as a product of that particular historical moment, including the anthropologist's participation in that moment and his/her agendas and priorities.

Second, while representing the viewpoints, goals, positions and life situations of a community or group of people might seem straightforward, it becomes much less so when it turns out that there is another community or group that sees its situation as equally compelling and competing with it, and cries out for representation of that viewpoint and situation. It is naïve of us to think—as many anthropologists did well into the 1970s and 1980s—that colonized people such as "Native Americans" are of one mind and that there are not disagreements, divisions, and conflicts among them about those agendas and priorities.

Third, we must be aware that our consultants, our clients, have their own agendas and priorities. They are not now, and probably never were, artless pursuers of a simple life constructed without awareness or knowledge of the industrializing, colonizing and imperializing world that surrounded them. "Representing the Other" was never a straightforward enterprise, and we should acknowledge it as a continuing problematic and inconsistent pursuit, even where we manage not to peer around the corner to see the described situation from a different side.

Bearing these ruminations in mind urges some degree of reflection on what is meant by "collaboration." In the last few decades, collaboration has come to mean a melding not only of the goals of the anthropologist and the "subject community," but also a hammering out of the strategy and the research design — thus developing recommendations and ways to implement them in dialectical, mutually reinforcing actions. This kind of collaboration has become especially prominent since passage of the Native American Graves Protection and



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Repatriation Act (1990) and the lobbying for adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Was this kind of collaboration, then, desirable in the water rights case in which I was expert witness? Absolutely so! Was it possible? Again absolutely so! Continual dialogue amongst expert witnesses, attorneys for the Department of the Interior, Department of Justice and the tribe, in conjunction with periodic meetings with Tribal representatives, resulted in a continually evolving strategy for reclaiming the water rights that the tribes had by law. But here is a caveat: collaboration does not mean "sympathy with...." All the sympathy possible with the goals of the tribes could not have substituted for a rigorous and critical investigation, informed by all the methodological requirements available within the framework of the anthropological enterprise.

Was the kind of precisely defined collaboration outlined above desirable in the reporting and negotiating role of the AAA panel members? Absolutely! Was it possible? Yes, but only if a much broader conceptualization of "collaboration" is acknowledged. It was evident that the Navajo Nation would develop goals, strategies, recommendations and the implementations thus required, and that these were diametrically opposed to those of the Hopi Tribe. Within the Hopi communities themselves, there was strong disagreement. It was absolutely impossible to honestly and legitimately claim that the work of any of the AAA panel members was "collaborative" in the more narrow sense.

However, in a broader sense – both before and after I came onto the panel – the process accomplished what neither of the tribal bureaucracies were able to do. It interfaced with the primary hegemony controlling on-the-ground implementations, the Navajo-Hopi Relocation Commission, in ways that affirmed some of the Commission's implementations and critiqued others. In the political economy of global relocations, that interface still constitutes one of the few instances of anthropological work that promoted attention to the rights of two groups of indigenous peoples long before such rights were officially and widely acknowledged.

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NOTES

¹Based on a paper presented at the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology annual conference, Denver, April 24, 2010.

²The panel produced annual reports that were published in the *Anthropology Newsletter*.

³President Clinton signed S. 1973, The Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute Settlement Act into law on October 11, 1996.

⁴For background on this very interesting but little-known anthropologist, see Price 2004:154-163 and Yelvington 2008, 2011.

⁵The Western Shoshone area also included the "Bruneau" Shoshones (Murphy and Murphy 1986).

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COMMENTARY

ON THE RECENT DECLINE OF GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

EDITH W. KING

ABSTRACT

Despite accomplishments of the Feminist Movement and the widely disseminated ideals about equality for women, cultural myths and stereotypes still prevail in the U. S., Europe, and elsewhere. In the latter stages of the 20th century, gains had been made in the use of non-sexist, gender neutral terminology for governmental and legal usage, in business and the media, higher education, and many other venues. However, in the first decades of the 21st century, there has been a creeping decline in the use of gender neutral expression in written and spoken forms. In this commentary, critiques are noted, examples are presented, and suggestions for improvement are offered.

KEY WORDS: gender neutral language, gender inclusive language, 21st century feminism

THE PROBLEM

With the rise of the Feminist Movement in the 1960s, consciousness raising efforts led to emphasizing the effects of patriarchy the world over. Now many women work in the paid economy. Women are increasing in the number of college graduates, particularly in the fields of law and medicine, dominated in the past by men. The explosion of women's scholarly research and publications, their popular literature and electronic documents, and their presence in media productions has been overwhelming. But despite these accomplishments and the widely disseminated ideals about equality for women, cultural myths and stereotypes still prevail in the U. S., Europe, and elsewhere in the world. With wry humor Gloria Steinem, the outstanding American feminist, illustrated how technology has changed gender stereotypes in the 21st century. She told her audience at a Smith College commencement in 2007 that in her generation, women were asked how many words they could type in a minute, a question that was never asked of then all-male student bodies at Harvard and Princeton. Female-only typing was rationalized by supposedly greater female verbal skills, attention to detail, and smaller fingers. At that time the public could not envision male typists, certainly not Ivy-League-educated ones. Steinem noted that now computers had come along, that "typing" now was called "keyboarding," and that suddenly men could type!

It is well known that those espousing feminist views have advocated for gender neutral and gender inclusive use of language in both written and spoken forms. During the last decades of the 20th century it seemed that gains had been made in the use of non-sexist, gender neutral terminology for governmental and legal usage, in business and the media, in educational publishing and major news sources, and in religious writings, as well as spoken sermons and services. However, in the first decades of the 21st century, I have noticed

the creeping decline of the use of gender neutral expression in written form, as well as in the spoken rhetoric streaming from U.S. presidential candidates and others running for political offices. Particularly the traditional labels "man", "mankind" and "man-made" seem to have returned to both the printed and spoken form in the media, the arts, sports reporting, U.S. federal government reports, and local newspaper articles. Here are some examples I collected in the early months of 2012.

CURRENT EXAMPLES OF GENDER BIAS IN WRITTEN LANGUAGE

A news report on commemorating the Titanic disaster: "...the disaster was just this terrible comedy of errors, both man-made and natural."

A news report on the raging fire in a mountain community: "Man-made burns blamed for starting wild fires...."

A U.S. federal agency statement on weather conditions: "...extremes that could become more frequent because of man-made climate change from the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil."

Sports reporting in the newspaper on skiing conditions: "Vail Resorts is committed to making as much man-made snow as possible, as needed, said a company spokeswoman."

A major art museum's brochure on the featured exhibit: "The variety of materials used to document mankind's significant thoughts and beliefs during this long span." And in another section of the museum's brochure on the same exhibit: "Throughout mankind's written history and even before it, the human spirit has sought to find sacred significance in the existing world."

From the *National Geographic Magazine*, April 2012, an article on the Titanic disaster authored by Hampton Sides: "On closer inspection, the site appears to be littered with man-made detritus."

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On the Recent Decline...

In the prestigious *New York Times*, Sunday Review Section, the headline and featured article blared "Man-Made Epidemics," although the body of this extensive article about the rise of worldwide infectious diseases never used the words "man-made."

A spoken example reported in the media. The former president of Harvard University said: "...part of universities' function is to keep alive man's greatest creations."

At this time I am not aware of specific discussions, dialogue, arguments, or writings about the decline of gender neutral language. However, it is my opinion that the use of "man" (e.g., man-made) has returned due to the creeping conservatism in the U.S. brought on by the financial down turn and conditions in the broader, global society. This trend toward linguistic practices of times past seems to be taking hold in a milieu of uncertainty, both fiscal and social.

CONCERNS ON THE RETURN OF "MAN-MADE"

As an author, researcher and instructor for over four decades, the topic of gender neutral writing has been a particular concern of mine. The ever-present discrimination that seems evident in written materials, such as those statements above using "man-made", "mankind", and "man", irritates me. Wordsmiths label this practice the pseudo-generic usage of man/men/mankind or the lumping together of both men and women alike. Anthropologists, sociologists and socio-linguists have reiterated for decades that language, written and spoken, powerfully influences attitudes, beliefs, and all types of behavior. Language usage reflects cultural traditions, customs, and values. But trends and practices in the use of language, written or spoken, change rapidly in our contemporary societies.

Some vociferous criticisms have been launched against the use of gender inclusive language in written and spoken form. Literary scholars, such as Jacques Barzun (2000), insist that there are long established sources going back to ancient times, such as versions of the Bible, making it obvious that the masculine pronoun refers to both female and male individuals. Also, the argument arises that using gender neutral language is awkward both for speaking and for writing. In response to those disputing the use of gender neutral language, one can point to today's shifting social and cultural attitudes. Current trends indicate that public and private businesses, government, and other organizations have become more sensitive and concerned about how language usage affects women and girls. Often it depends on how we broach a social or cultural matter when using rhetoric denoting gender. The structure of a language, its grammar or geographical variations, can influence usage. Furthermore, differences in culture or ethnicity affect usage (Garcia, personal correspondence, 2012; Garcia 2004).

Another line of reasoning asserts that much of gender neutral language is unnecessary because society has overcome gender bias and now none exists. This assertion is obviously erroneous. Continual media and news reporting readily confirms that

equality for women is an illusion. Critics of gender neutral language will bring up the issue of political correctness (Schwartz 2010). However, gender neutral language is not a question of political correctness, it is a civil rights issue calling for equal treatment and regard for over half of humanity. Numerous publications, handbooks, and guides available in print and online challenge the assertions negating gender neutral usage. Among them are *Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language* (UNESCO 1999); Miller and Swift's *The Handbook of Non-Sexist Writing: For Writers, Editors and Speakers* (1988); and Peters' *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage* (2004).

In her helpful guide to fair and accurate use of the English language (*Talking About People*, 1997), Rosalie Maggio reminds us that biased language refers to people in imbalanced or inaccurate ways. It leaves out certain individuals or groups. The directive: 'Employees are welcome to bring their wives and children' leaves out those employees who might want to bring husbands, friends, or same-sex partners. "Sexist language promotes and maintains attitudes that stereotype people according to gender while assuming that the male is the norm – the significant gender....When words like mankind, forefathers, brotherhood and alumni got a foothold in the language, it was because men were visible, men were in power, and that is what their world looked like" (Maggio 1997: 2,5).

STRATEGIES FOR ALLEGIANCE TO GENDER NEUTRAL USAGE

There are useful techniques for everyday written correspondence, as well as professional writing, that one can employ to avoid the pitfalls of biased writing, particularly the pseudo-generic use of "he." Wordsmiths recommend: Rewrite the sentence in the plural; omit the pronoun "he" entirely; substitute we/us/our; use the second person "you"; replace "he" with words like "someone," "anyone," "one," "the one," "no one"; use genderless nouns/phrases such as "the average person or worker" or write out "he or she" or "her or his." Now in the new century, feminists, academics, educators, journalists, and other professionals are better recognizing that how we use language, written or spoken, really matters. Wording does affect our thinking. Manuscripts and drafts of papers, research reports, and news articles can be redlined indicating biased phrases and words, particularly "mankind" and "man-made," when "people," "humankind," or "humans" will express the point just as well. Utilizing "man" or "to man" as a verb is another example. This type of biased usage is unnecessary. For example, the phrase "having a guard to man the control room" is easily re-worded without losing the meaning, as "having a person as guard in the control room."

Spurred by the prospect that gender inclusive usage is in decline, another strategy for its maintenance is that all of us be on the alert in identifying biased written and spoken verbiage. I have provided a number of examples that I recently collected from national newspapers and media sources. Readers of this commentary can do the same. Then action can be taken by in-



forming the source of this biased usage by phone, email, or direct personal communication. In the case of the exhibit brochure at a major art museum, a gentle protest brings awareness that the public is concerned about the use of mankind when "humankind," "people," or "humans" would do just as well.

Yet another, complementary approach is to proactively alert others – family members, relatives, co-workers, friends, and neighbors. We can help them to be aware of gender biased expressions that can be re-worded. Following on the examples provided earlier, easily overlooked but quite humorous, is the announcement on the skiing conditions at a well-known ski resort. The statement, purportedly coming from a "spokeswoman," proclaimed that man-made snow would be ready for skiing. The spokeswoman could have said the resort was committed to making snow with machines and left "man-made" out, since it was not necessary. Proactive awareness of the use of gender inclusive language is still essential in moving toward equality in contemporary society.

Finally, the role of staff, teachers, and faculty in higher education is critical. Once again they are called upon to examine the curricular and media materials, textbooks, workbooks, written assignments, and educational supplements for gender neutral language. It is possible that biased, sexist language has crept back into once-carefully developed work. Educators are crucial in the maintenance of gender inclusive language, whether written or spoken. The classic saying of anthropologists, "as we speak so we think," reinforces the point. Gender inclusive and gender neutral speaking and writing are all the more necessary in an era of financial downturn and worldwide turmoil.

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